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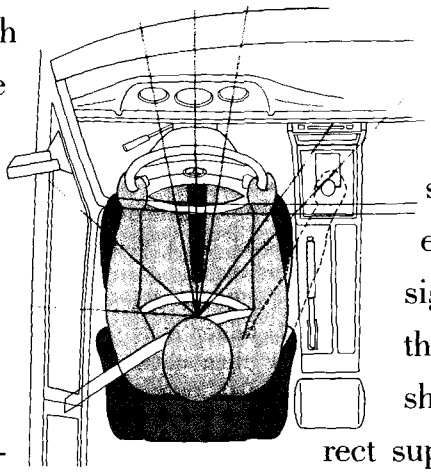

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TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

THE DREAMER AWAKES

One way the experts look at the price of a stock is as the market's estimate of the "discounted present value" of the company's future earnings. What would you pay for a fraction of that company's profits for the indefinite future? That's what you should be willing to pay for a share of stock in that company.

One way to look at the crash of the stock market, therefore, is as a massive revaluation of the future prosperity of the American economy. You might call it the difference between the Reaganite vision and reality. Shares of IBM lost a quarter of their value on Massacre Monday. Obviously IBM didn't lose a quarter of its factories, scientific expertise, marketing network, and so on. But the value of those assets depends entirely on what they can produce, and suddenly it seems that what they are likely to produce is worth a lot less.

New York Stock Exchange shares lost $500 billion of value on Massacre Monday alone—closer to a trillion since the market's peak in August. Since the crash cannot be traced to anything peculiar to listed stocks, it is a market judgment on the economy as a whole, of which the stock exchange is just a part. Clearly the "present value" of America's future prosperity has been revalued downward by several trillion dollars. Depending on how you punch your calculator, the market seems to have concluded that America's prospects look several hundred billion dollars a year worse than they did a while back.

This calculation puts the paralysis of America's political leaders in perspective. Imagine if the president and Congress had agreed last summer to cut the federal deficit by $60 billion. Let's say they did it through a 20-cent-a-gallon gasoline tax for about $20 billion, trimming middle-class entitlements another $20 billion (ending the tax exemption for Social Security payments is almost enough to do this alone), and raising tax rates one percent for another $20 billion or so. That may not be an ideally fair and efficient formula. It's just one of many possible variations on the theme of getting America's appetites back under control.

The point is this: Can anyone doubt that such an achievement would have prevented the crash? In other words, can anyone doubt the market's judgment that our inability to make a $60-billion-a-year "sacrifice" is in fact sucking hundreds of billions a year from America's economic prospects? Those who fretted about the dangerously depressive effects of a piddling tax increase can now contemplate the depressive effects of a sudden trillion-dollar loss of wealth.

Instead, our "leaders" agree in principle to cut $23 billion from some fictional budget level, then bicker interminably about the details. Congress insists on declaring four-fifths of all spending sacrosanct, while President Reagan plays Horatio at the Bridge against a $12 billion (*one* percent of the budget) tax increase.

Although the gloomsayers have tended to emphasize the immensity of the economic challenge facing America, the challenge is really trivial—which just makes our failure to meet it more appalling. Politicians live in terror of their elderly constituents. How many of them, in retrospect, wouldn't gladly have given up a couple hundred dollars in Medicare benefits in order to have back the nest eggs they thought they had on October 14?

Of course, America's prospects didn't really drop by a third in a week. The market was like Wile E. Coyote in the Roadrunner cartoons, who runs off the edge of a cliff and keeps right on going, until he looks down and then plummets. Conservatives argue that the cause of the plunge is the coming end of the Reagan administration and the fear that a Democratic administration will tear down the magnificent edifice of prosperity he has created. The imminent end of Reaganism *is*, I think, a cause of the crash, which certainly symbolizes that end. But it's not Reagan's policies that the market dreads losing. It's his ability to conjure up the Coyote Effect, the willing suspension of disbelief that you can live beyond your means indefinitely and never have to pay up. We are awakening from a dream.

The Democrats are not blameless. They make the rules of the entitlement blackmail game that Republicans merely play. They shout the loudest for ruinous protectionism. But this has been Reagan's era. He's the great leader who has led people into the dream world of lower taxes without lower government benefits, prosperity without the bother of savings and investment, consuming without producing.

The capital of that dream world has been Washington, D.C. Conservatives like to accuse liberals of a "Beltway mentality"—a removal from the reality that lies outside the golden circle. But inside the Beltway is where the blinding mist of Reaganism has been the thickest. Conservatives actually thought they had abolished the Phillips Curve. That much-mocked concept, which holds there's a trade-off between avoiding inflation and avoiding recession, also expresses the broader principle that economic policy choices cannot be pain-free. The Phillips Curve is about to boomerang upon us with a vengeance.

The Reagan administration's response to the crash, in the first few days, was twofold: first, hollow and increasingly eerie expressions of confidence; and second, the blaming of foreigners. It seems the Germans allowed their interest rates to climb a fraction of a point. Treasury Secretary James Baker said this violated the "spirit" of an agreement among the major Western economies to coordinate monetary policy for currency stability. But monetary coordination is not a matter of twisting dials. Our own lack of fiscal discipline grotesquely violates the "spirit" of that agreement and makes real coordination impossible. Who are we to tell the Germans not to worry about inflation or anything else? Our only leverage is the threat to drag them and the rest of the world down with us.

For years the doom-and-gloomers have had to endure the taunt: "What do you know that the stock market doesn't?" (Or, "If you're so smart, how come everyone else is getting rich?") Nevertheless, this is hardly an occasion for gloating. The only comfort to be derived from the crash is that it is more a reflection of economic troubles than a cause of them. Reagan's defenders are right: nothing fundamental has changed. At least now we're awake.

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CORRESPONDENCE

THE BUSINESS OF ETHICS

To the editors:
Fareed Zakaria's proposal for elevating the ethical standards of business people ("Ethics for Greedheads," October 19) is not so much a suggestion as a surrender. He has one positive recommendation: to imbue business school students with the same sense of professionalism and pride conveyed to prospective lawyers. But law schools do a pathetic job of increasing the ethical awareness of their students—mainly because they adopt the rationalization offered by Zakaria: that students "are a bit old for basic character formation." Since when does character formation stop in the 20s, particularly when one has been distracted from considering ethical issues by years of driving for academic and career success? If faculties were to take ethics seriously, to convey to students that ethical deliberation is essential to the lawyer's or executive's basic reasoning process, they might well change a lot of students' viewpoints. At present, however, faculties passively let the students dictate this aspect of the educational agenda; and the bulk of the students simply want to be shown the easiest path to the pot of gold at the end of the career rainbow. If the situation never changes, it will be because we would rather perpetuate myths about human nature than accept our own ethical responsibilities as educators.

LAWRENCE ADAM BEYER
New Orleans, Louisiana

To the editors:
"Ethics for Greedheads" runs roughshod over some accepted journalistic norms and may even have ethical problems itself. Despite the impression left by Fareed Zakaria, he never interviewed me personally about the Stanford Business School's approach to ethics. By reading old press releases instead, he allowed several key inaccuracies to creep into his article. We do not have a separate required ethics course at the Stanford Business School, nor do we advocate that approach. We do have an elective course entitled "Ethical Dilemmas in Management" but have also pursued the belief that ethics ought to be integrated into all business school courses. Another of Zakaria's purported quotations from me is interpreted as saying that we address the ethical issue of the moment rather than prepare students for the moral questions of the 1990s. Actually, we scrupulously avoid the temptation he warns us against by identifying the timeless characteristics of the dilemmas managers face and by teaching a process for recognizing emerging moral dilemmas.

KIRK HANSON
Stanford, California

To the editors:
Fareed Zakaria claims that the Wharton School does not believe business ethics should be taught in a separate course. He never spoke with a Wharton School official, but the school's press office sent him a study done by Thomas Dunfee. Dunfee's research entertains the pros and cons of a separate ethics course—Zakaria quotes only the cons. The study concludes that we need to integrate ethics into the core curriculum. However, Wharton offers six sections of an elective course in business ethics, and each year 200-250 "greedheads" choose to take it.

JOANNE B. CIULLA
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

CONSENSUS

To the editors:
Regarding "Make 'Em Pay" (by Morton M. Kondracke, October 12): "If Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, George Bush, Bob Dole, Irving Kristol, Sam Nunn, Les Aspin, Richard Gephardt, Pat Schroeder, a nearly unanimous U.S. House of Representatives, and Donald Trump are all in favor of something, it must be an idea" . . . like the Vietnam War.

ERIC ALTERMAN
Washington, D.C.

AIDES DECAMP

To the editors:
Although it clearly ill serves the public to have our best and brightest constantly leaving government to toil for the richest and most powerful ("The Aides Virus" by Jeffrey L. Pasley, October 19), the system may not suffer as much as one might think. All too often those enormous retainers to former members and staffers produce little real benefit to the interests who pay so dearly for them. Former congressmen and staffers fail miserably when they advocate positions different from those they held (or would have held) while on the Hill. To succeed, lobbyists need credibility. Nothing is less believable than position reversals from those receiving large retainers. And business clients beware. You hire a lobbyist because he has close, personal relationships on the Hill. Those relationships cut both ways. Once the doors are closed many lobbyists simply won't push a client's case as hard as it might otherwise be pushed because they want to stay in the good graces of their former Hill colleagues.

ROBERT S. ADLER
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

RIGHTS FOR THE INCOMPETENT

To the editors:
Contrary to TRB, I fear the rights revolution has not gone far enough ("The Tyranny of Beauty," October 12). After all, if we are to outlaw discrimination on the basis of looks, presumably by judicial fiat, how can Abner Mikva justify discriminating in favor of the most accomplished student at Harvard Law School? What right does this student have to first claim on a plum job at the nation's most prestigious appeals court? Are lesser students at Harvard, or at other law schools, to be ruled out arbitrarily based only on the judge's narrow-minded view of achievement? I say it is high time we speak out for competence-blind hiring. No, on second thought, it is clear that the incompetent have been discriminated against from time immemorial. Only a bold program of affirmative action for the incompetent will rectify this grave blot of injustice that plagues our society.

DAVID M. ROWE
Massapequa, New York

A SMALL WORLDVIEW

To the editors:
Senator Paul Simon's belief that had Ronald Reagan once been an exchange student in Moscow we would be living in a different, better world today ("Pee-Wee's Big Adventure" by Fred Barnes, October 5) is one of the classics among the notable misapprehensions of Soviet-American relations, and indeed of his-

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
NOVEMBER 9, 1987

RESIGN, ED MEESE

Ed Meese has been lucky. For more than a year, what ought to be a front-page scandal—the legal and ethical problems of the nation's top law enforcement officer—has been obscured: first by Iranamok, more recently (and less justifiably) by the Democratic presidential candidate follies. The attorney general is currently the subject of a special prosecutor, James McKay, who is investigating Meese's role in obtaining government contracts for the Wedtech Corp. and others. Meese was called back to testify before the Wedtech grand jury in Washington for a third time on October 22. He also is one focus of another special prosecutor, Lawrence Walsh, who is looking into Iranamok. Meanwhile a Senate subcommittee has been probing Meese's apparent failure to comply with government ethics laws in his 1985 and 1986 financial disclosures.

The spectacle of Ed Meese under investigation is hardly new. His appointment as attorney general was shelved for over nine months in 1984 so that an earlier special prosecutor, Jacob Stein, could examine the relationship between his personal finances and his White House hiring practices. Back then Meese was accused of, among other things, having rewarded Thomas Barrack, a California banker, for helping to sell the Meese family home in La Mesa, outside San Diego. The evidence shows that Barrack contributed $83,000 of his own money to the sale, that he met several times with Meese in Washington and elsewhere, that he gained introductions to five Cabinet members shortly after going out to eat with Meese, and that he became deputy undersecretary of the interior shortly after that. Stein decided not to indict Meese in this and several similar episodes. But the uncontested facts paint a portrait of—at the very least—ethical sloppiness on Meese's part.

At his confirmation hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee in January 1985, Meese vowed to start fresh. Pointing to the Stein results as a vindication of his character, he nevertheless assured the committee that he would be more cautious in the future. "I have a much higher level of sensitivity to these matters now than when I arrived in Washington. . . . I would take great pains to avoid any kind of a situation or circumstance that might give rise to a misunderstanding." Whatever pains Meese may have taken, he's up to his Cabinet level in "matters" once again.

Let's start with Wedtech. The scandal is still unfolding, but so far grand juries in Washington and New York have yielded 11 indictments and six convictions against past executives and associates of the South Bronx arms manufacturer. The charges range from racketeering and obstruction of justice to bribery, grand larceny, wire fraud, and extortion. Meese became entangled in the mess at the behest of his old law school classmate and pal, E. Robert Wallach, a flashy, self-styled "liberal Democrat" who spells his name e.e. cummings-style ("e. robert wallach"). Before 1980 Wallach was a big San Francisco lawyer with a reputation in personal injury law but few ties to Washington. When Reagan swept to victory Wallach advertised his closeness to Meese and in 1981 was hired by Wedtech to lobby for the company. At the time Wedtech was an obscure machine toolmaker that had found itself locked out of the Pentagon's roster of preferred military contractors.

Hiring Wallach paid off big for Wedtech. In 1981 and 1982 Wallach bombarded Meese—then White House chief of staff—with memos urging him to intervene on Wedtech's behalf as it sought to land a $32 million no-bid Army engine contract through the minority set-aside program of the Small Business Administration. What happened next remains fuzzy. The undisputed fact is that Meese's deputy,

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James Jenkins, chaired what investigators call an "unprecedented" White House meeting to review this minor Army engine contract, and as a direct result Wedtech won the contract. Meese has stated that he has no memory of ordering the exact meeting, but the evidence seems to indicate that he did.

WHAT STARTED SMALL built quickly. Despite a poor performance record and burgeoning profits, Wedtech continued to receive preferential treatment from the SBA long after investigators say its public stock sale disqualified it from the benefits of the minority-preference program. In all, the company received more than $250 million in mostly non-competitive defense contracts between 1982 and 1986. The windfall made many people rich. Wallach collected more than $1.5 million in legal fees and profit shares. In the spring of 1985 Meese deputy Jenkins went to work in Washington as a paid consultant for Wedtech (after sitting out the minimum 12 months required by the Ethics in Government Act). He earned $165,000 before Wedtech declared bankruptcy last December.

Meese has acknowledged obtaining "a fair hearing" for Wedtech in the 1982 Army engine deal, and nothing more. If that were the case his behavior was still remarkably shoddy. Unless he's an idiot, which he's not, he surely realized the value of a special White House hearing for a tiny would-be defense contractor.

The record shows, however, that Meese's circumstantial relationship to Wedtech goes deeper than just one misguided favor for his eccentric lower-case pal. As investigators continue to pick up the pieces of Wedtech, Meese's name keeps appearing in different places. Last month a former top Wedtech official testified to a Senate subcommittee that Wallach told him he'd "spoken to his friend" about Wedtech's efforts to win a $135 million no-bid contract to build pontoon bridges, and that he'd taken "his friend" to mean Meese. According to the witness, Mario Moreno, Meese responded by personally contacting Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger on Wedtech's behalf, shortly before the company won the pontoon contract.

Investigators say they have a copy of a Wallach memo telling Meese of the status of the pontoon contract and suggesting what needed to be done. Spokesmen for Meese and Weinberger have denied the two ever talked about the contract. The issue remains unresolved, though it seems clear that something occurred between Wedtech and the Navy that enabled Wedtech to leapfrog countless other companies and get the nod over the stringent objections of top Navy brass, such as Adm. T. J. Hughes, who correctly predicted the company could not complete the project. Everett Pyatt, assistant secretary of the Navy, has admitted numerous contacts with another leading Wedtech lobbyist, former Reagan White House aide Lyn Nofziger.

What would turn Meese's role in the Wedtech affair from one of gross ethical numbness to one of actual criminality would be evidence of a quid pro quo. No cash or benefits have been traced to Meese in exchange for his role in helping Wedtech. But recent revelations suggest that a payoff may indeed have taken place, though in a highly convoluted manner.

In May 1985, three months after his confirmation as attorney general, Meese—acting on Wallach's advice—sold $50,000 worth of stock and put the cash in what he called a "limited blind partnership"—a financial oxymoron since the law allows for "qualified blind trusts"—with a San Francisco investment banker named W. Franklyn Chinn (a businessman with no listed phone number). Meese "inadvertently" left the Chinn partnership off of a list of his financial interests circulated within the Department of Justice just one day after he entered into it, though he did detail the stocks he'd just sold. He remembered to list the "limited blind partnership" (in what he neutrally called Financial Management International Inc.) on official financial reporting forms for 1985 and 1986 but, improperly, failed to identify Chinn as the trustee and to itemize his investments, as was required.

Given Meese's history of carelessness in filing his forms, his neglect regarding Chinn ordinarily would raise eyebrows, though little suspicion. But it turns out that Chinn had been a member of the board of directors at Wedtech before becoming Meese's financial adviser. Thus, while ostensibly complying with the law in putting together a supposedly blind account, beyond reproach, Meese handed his savings to a man who was intimately involved with Wedtech. Meese has said he didn't know Chinn had a Wedtech connection, but Wallach has stated publicly that he told the attorney general.

THE PLOT THICKENS. Chinn managed to double Meese's investment in two years, running the fund up to around $100,000. The McKay probe is now scrutinizing Chinn's trading transactions to determine whether they violated a Federal Reserve regulation and a Securities and Exchange Commission law. The unusually high return and the manner in which the trades were made (some blocks appear to have been purchased on credit) prompt two possible explanations: either Meese was the beneficiary of interest-free loans that he sloppily or otherwise failed to disclose, or the whole arrangement was a hidden payoff from Wedtech.

The *New York Times* reported in mid-October that special prosecutor McKay is also exploring the possibility that Meese used his influence and connections in October 1985 to help Wallach with an Iraqi pipeline project in which Wallach held a stake. Wallach apparently invoked Meese's name to press an attorney in the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel for a favorable ruling on the efforts of an American-Swiss joint venture to build a pipeline from Iraq to the Red Sea. Chief among the unclear aspects is whether the attorney general specifically interceded for Wallach in this case, or whether Wallach merely used his name. The *Times* reports that former national security adviser Robert C. McFarlane has told investigators that Meese directly interceded.

Beyond Meese's financial dealings, there is his role in

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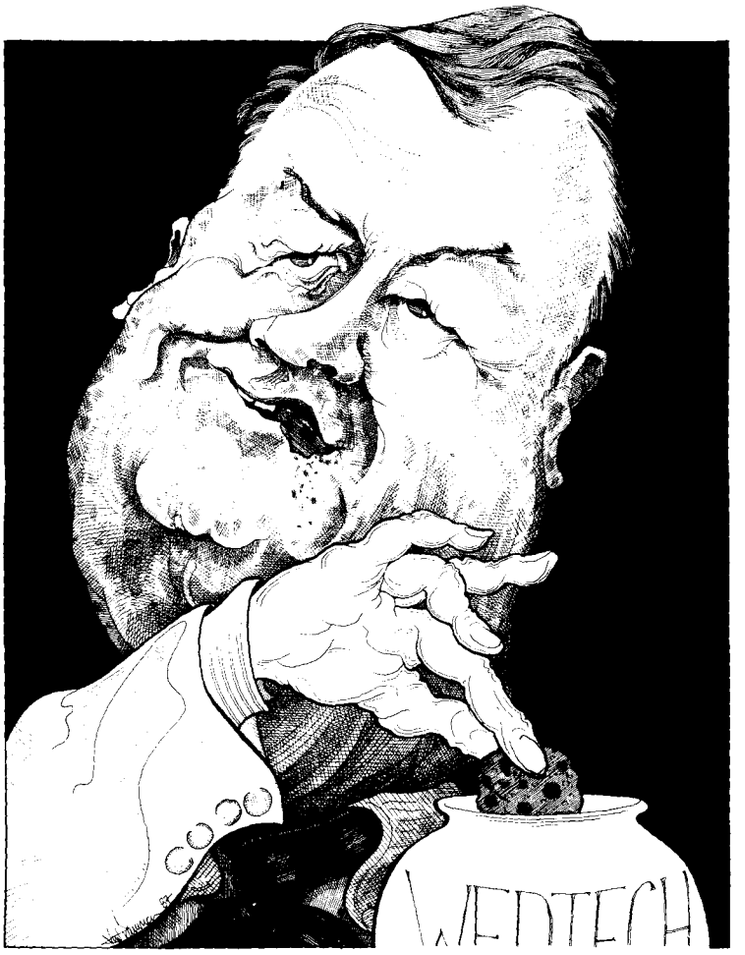
Iranamok. That affair touches Meese in six principal ways. It was Meese who gave legal approval for the presidential "finding" of January 1986 authorizing the arms shipments to Iran and the withholding of information about them from Congress. There may or may not be a lawful route through the maze of laws requiring congressional notification and approval for covert actions and for sales of arms to officially designated terrorist countries, but there's no sign that the nation's highest law enforcement officer took these laws seriously.

Meese's role as the secret deal started to unravel is more suspicious. He arranged a crucial three-week delay during October 1986 in the federal investigation into Southern Air Transport, the formerly CIA-owned cargo firm made famous when mercenary Eugene Hasenfus survived a plane crash while smuggling arms into Nicaragua. Meese's motives have never been ascertained, but during this delay Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams uttered his famous misstatement flatly denying that the plane carrying Hasenfus had anything to do with the U.S. government. It seems possible that Meese was covering up the illegal *contra* connection while Congress was debating legal aid to the *contras*. The same suspicion is aroused by Meese's documented moves to slow federal inquiries into *contra* gunrunning and drug smuggling in Miami (see "Stuck in Miami" by Murray Waas, TNR, November 24, 1986).



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Moreover, both these cases seem to undermine Meese's contention that he knew nothing of the *contra* diversion until November 22, 1986, the night his Justice Department discovered the fatal *contra* diversion memo in Oliver North's files. Meese is one official for whom the question "What did he know and when did he know it?" is absolutely crucial, for any hint that he is lying about his ignorance virtually proves a cover-up.

There's more. Meese failed to call in the FBI until five days after the *contra* diversion was discovered, thereby freeing John Poindexter and North to complete their celebrated shredding party. When he confronted Poindexter with the diversion memo and asked the president's national security adviser for his excuse, Meese neglected to ask him whether President Reagan had known about the scheme. Other features of Meese's widely deplored preliminary investigation include his misstep in his first interview with North about the diversion memo, when he failed to remind North of his right to remain silent, thus possibly rendering this crucial interview inadmissible evidence.

On at least one key question—the role of the late CIA Director William Casey—either Meese or Oliver North has certainly committed perjury. North testified that he specifically told the attorney general about Casey's role. Meese testified the opposite. One of the two men is lying; if it's Meese, it raises even more doubts about the attorney general's credibility.

Those warmly disposed to character reading have explained Meese's troubles regarding Iranamok, and to a lesser degree the Wedtech scandal, as symptoms of a conflicted personality. Meese wore too many hats and so was caught between being attorney general on the one hand and loyal friend of President Reagan on the other. Maybe this dual personality view is the key to deciphering all of Meese's confusing actions. Private citizen on the one hand, presidential crony on the other. Struggling middle-class lawyer on the one hand, upwardly mobile arriviste on the other. Careless administrator on the one hand, chronic liar on the other.

Perhaps Meese will avoid conviction, or even indictment, on this smorgasbord of dubious achievements. He certainly is entitled to every protection and presumption of innocence that American justice affords, including the ones he himself disapproves of. But in an era when presidential candidates are driven from the race because ancient plagiarisms cast doubt on their "character," why should this character sail unmolested through his tenure as attorney general? Ed Meese should resign. □

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JUST WAR IN THE GULF

Everyone on our side is cheering the U.S. Navy's destruction of an Iranian oil platform. The British, the Gulf Arabs, the Israelis, even the U.S. Congress are saying that the U.S. attack, causing no loss of life, was a justified and measured response to Iran's Silkworm missile attack on a U.S.-flagged tanker in Kuwaiti waters. So why are we nervous?

It's not because we don't know *when* this will end, but how. We are satisfied that the United States has every right to have its warships in the Gulf. And if they need to be there indefinitely as a symbol of U.S. dedication to regional stability, that's OK with us too. The problem is that we have stepped into the middle of a war, and the Reagan administration has never made clear what our aims are and how far we are prepared to go to carry them out. The administration gives every indication, in fact, of making this up as it goes along.

The most obvious danger ahead is an escalating tit for tat with Iran. Until October 16 Iran had been content to fire invective at the United States. Then it fired a Silkworm missile in a way seemingly designed to test our commitment. We responded in a moderate fashion. What next? The administration anticipates another Iranian attack, possibly a terrorist incident, though a mine or missile attack on a warship can't be ruled out. To the extent we can fix responsibility, we will respond once again—probably against Iranian missile batteries or Revolutionary Guard bases. And, presumably, the Iranians will hit back at another U.S. target, and so on up a ladder leading . . . where?

Even more harrowing is the possibility raised in a new Senate Foreign Relations Committee report that says that

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on Chart
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1. FEAR ITSELF

Crash. Was the crash the Madness of Crowds, or was the Dow's August 2700 average the greater madness? The computer programs notwithstanding, the dimensions of the panic indicate how much giddy, fingers-crossed greed underlay the wild growth, and how little confidence there is in the house-of-credit-cards U.S. economy, or the scissors-and-paste international economy.

2. WHEN THE BUCKS STOPPED

Political entropy. Even some of Reagan's staunchest supporters connect him to the debacle: his somnolent leadership has resulted in uncertainty. Reagan's Black Monday appearance was typical. He shouted plaintively at the press with his helicopter screaming protectively behind him, avoiding questions about trade and budget deficits and the crazy threat of monetary war against Germany.

3. POLITICAL PLATFORM

Gulf. Destroying Iran's Gulf platform got plenty of support, but it stemmed from a desire that the U.S. not look even more foolish there than it already does. There is no sense of rallying 'round Reagan. Why should there be? In the five months of this adventure the White House has made no effort to be publicly intelligible, much less to form a consensus.

4. WELL-WROUGHT YARN

Little Jessica. In 1951 Billy Wilder made *Ace in the Hole*, his acerbic film about press exploitation of a man trapped in a mine. Then, cynicism about such events had a social purpose. It doesn't anymore. Social contact in the urbanized U.S. is so reduced that "Jessica" dramas are as much sublimation as classical pathos. The "Midland Spirit"? Few city-dwellers can name the kids on their own block.

5. ZÉRO DE CONDUITE

AIDS. AIDS, reasserting itself as a media issue, has been boosted both by the gay rights march and by Randy Shilts's new book. Shilts's account of Patient Zero, an early conduit of AIDS, got far more attention than his indictment of our utterly inadequate policy. Some of the foreign press has noted U.S. fumbling on the AIDS issue.

6. POCKETBOOK PICKS

1988. If the Democrats have anticipated riding to the country's economic rescue, then get those dwarfs some ponies. Even if there is a significant market recovery, the crash has pulled the prosperity theme out from under the Republicans.

7. PETERS' PRINCIPLES

Britainization. Look who thinks there's an "accelerating American decline." Tom Peters, the guru of business excellence, has had a flabbergasting change of heart. His new book throws out his excellence gospel, a major business theme throughout the Reagan years, and looks instead at the slumping per capita GNP, low productivity, bad trade policy, and the savings problem. He says he's in despair. All the way to the bank.

8. IF THE SHOE FITS

U.N. Just as the U.S. starts walking out on General Assembly inanities, just as it becomes the U.N.'s major financial delinquent, the organization has a new beau. Mikhail Gorbachev has seized a moral high ground with a pledge to pay all U.S.S.R. arrears and a series of pronouncements on using the U.N. for international security. Even if it's all baloney, it's astute.

9. AVENIDA MADISON

Bilingualism. Advertisers have joined Hollywood in learning Spanish. Campbell's, Hershey, Domino's, and others have started Spanish-language ad campaigns this year in the burgeoning Spanish media. The biggest Spanish TV show here, for years an import, is now U.S.-made. The field's grown enough for an issue to spill over: Spanish TV has long run hard liquor ads, and now some Anglos are objecting to them.

10. THE WATERS OF BABYLON

American Jews. Theodore Herzl prophesied that the Diaspora would melt away once there was an Israel. He may have been right, but not in the way he expected. Jews here are marrying late, some 40 percent of the marriages are to non-Jews, the average number of children is down to 1.5, and few of these grow up in Jewish communities or receive any serious Jewish education. One explanation: U.S. Jews are "disappearing in comfort."

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

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Iraq is weaker than widely understood, and could lose the land war to Iran. Administration officials acknowledge that this is a real possibility, and they are not reassuring about how the Iranians would be contained thereafter. Would U.S. forces be required to blunt an Iranian offensive against Kuwait? It's hard for the administration to talk about such possibilities without spreading panic. What it should be doing is forming a consensus among American allies that they will support U.S. efforts to contain Iran. This is happening, but all too slowly.

A welcome late arrival to this consensus is Israel, which has suddenly realized that Iran's militant Islamic fundamentalism is the greatest present danger to Middle East stability. It took a linkup between PLO and Hezbollah terrorists in Lebanon to dissolve Israel's illusion that Iraq is a greater threat than Iran.

The bottom line is that the Ayatollah's Iran *is* a threat to vital Western interests, and must be prevented from dominating the Gulf. That is the point that the administration needs to pound home to allies, the public, Congress—and Iran. Our preferred method of containing Iran should be diplomatic, and if the Soviet Union will not join in an arms embargo against Iran, that should limit the budding détente between us. But if and when diplomacy proves inadequate, the United States has to be prepared to fight Iran. The administration could do a lot to make us less nervous if it acknowledged that prospect and produced a decisive consensus around it. Firm resolve in the West might even serve to deter Iran.

NOTEBOOK

□ AFTERLIFE:

Kansas statesman Landon dies at 100

—*Sioux Falls* (Kansas) *Argus Leader*, October 13, page one

Alf Landon, 100, recuperating from illness

—same paper, same day, page 11

(thanks to N. K. Palmer, Pierre, South Dakota)

□ OUT ON A LIMB:

Replacement for Bork expected if nominee loses battle

—*Knoxville* (Tennessee) *Journal*, October 7

(thanks to Greg Altum, Sweetwater, Tennessee)

□ STOOD UP: In their relentless pursuit of peace, and of recognition for their national rights, Palestinian leaders from the occupied territories, including notable pro-PLO Palestinians, failed to show up for a scheduled meeting on Sunday with Secretary of State George Shultz. Maybe they no longer recognize the legitimacy of the United States either.

□ HARD COVERS FOR HARD TIMES: TNR's theater critic, Robert Brustein, has published a collection of his writings, *Who Needs Theatre: Dramatic Opinions* (Atlantic Monthly Press). *An Artificial Wilderness: Essays on Twentieth Century Literature* (Morrow) by Sven Birkerts includes several essays that first appeared in these pages. TNR's economics correspondent, Robert Kuttner, has actually written a brand-new book, *The Life of the Party: Democratic Prospects in 1988 and Beyond* (Viking).

THE MONEY CULTURE

WHERE DID IT ALL GO?

"FINANCIAL INSANITY," wrote John Kenneth Galbraith, "can be a source of pure enjoyment." Sure, it's a kick to watch Carl Icahn and $300,000-a-year punk Wall Street traders flounder. After all, when the Dow goes down 508 points, Galbraith says, "nothing is being lost but money."

In fact, it's not even money. For most of us, it's something else called wealth, or value. When the stock market falls, not a penny comes out of your pocket unless you sell. Six hundred million shares traded on Monday, and while that may sound like a lot, it's only a tiny fraction of the total shares traded on the New York Exchange. The owners of most of those shares didn't really lose money on Monday; instead, the value of their companies declined, on average, by a fifth to a quarter. Nonetheless, a fifth of the productive wealth of the world was wiped out in less than two days. Where did it go? To the land of the lost buttons and car keys?

It didn't go anywhere finite because it wasn't finite to begin with. A crash brings us back to earth and reminds us that the value of financial assets is all in the mind. The market decides on the value through means that are mathematical and aesthetic, mechanical and psychological. But mostly value is based on predictions, and telling the future is a tricky business.

Consider a group of friends who start a Cajun restaurant issuing 100,000 shares of Cajurama at $1 apiece, paying for them in cash. The value of each share is easily calculated. If you own one percent of the firm, you own one percent of its total assets of $100,000. The restaurant prospers, and soon the corporation owns a chain of restaurants, making profits of $700,000 a year. What is the value of the company now?

The value is simply what someone is willing to pay for all the stock. How does a purchaser make that valuation? He bases it on how profitable the restaurant is likely to be in the future and the firm's assets, both tangible (cash, fixtures, etc.) and intangible (staff, recipes, good will). He also looks at what investors are willing to pay for other publicly traded restaurants chains. If investors are paying $15 for every dollar of profits or 15 times earnings for restaurant stocks, that would make a share of stock in this

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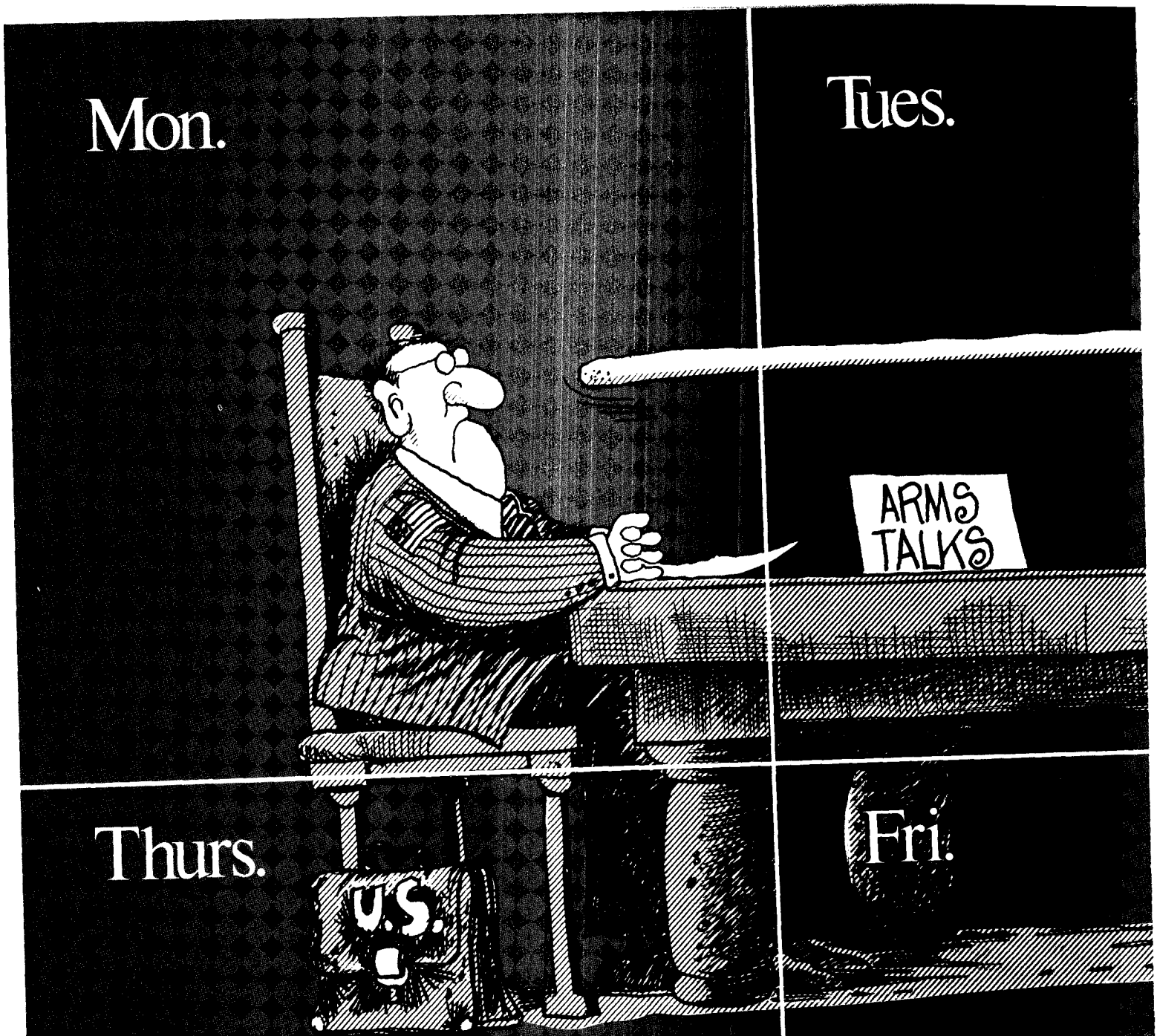

The week a lighter perspective gave you a clearer view.

Every week there's a page in Newsweek that takes a lighter look at some heavy subjects.

It's a page called Perspectives. A gathering of cartoons and comments on the world around us and on some of the people and events that we might otherwise take too seriously.

Sometimes witty, often biting, always revealing, Perspectives brings our readers statements overheard in hallways or on the airwaves, material spotted in newspapers across the country and from other countries, lunacies and wisdom in speeches and interviews that—quite simply—help keep things in perspective.

It's this variety of opinion and viewpoint that makes Newsweek different from

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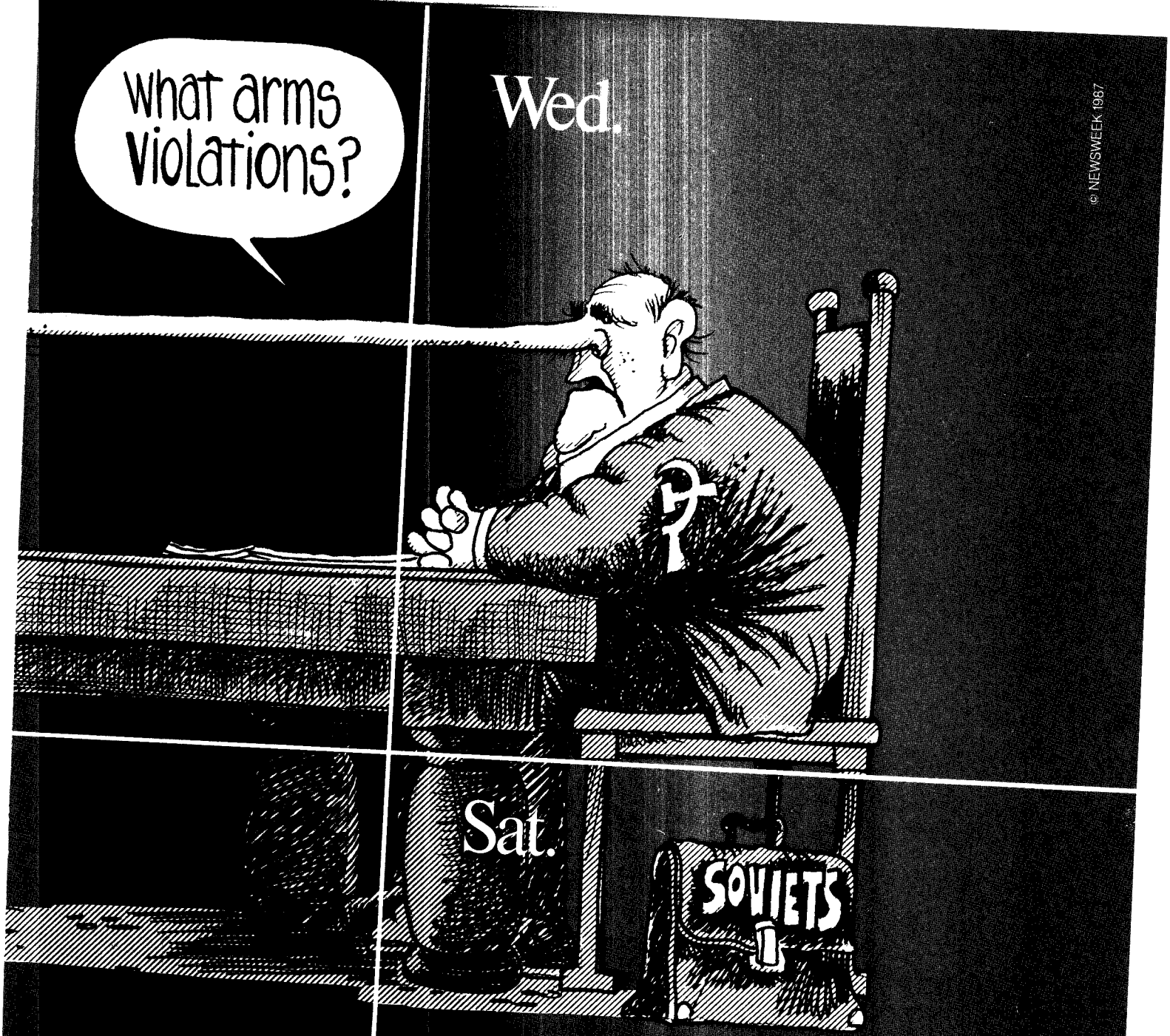

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Why it happened. What it means.

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burgeoning chain worth $105, or $10.5 million for the 100,000 shares.

Now, let's say that the potential purchaser tells the stockholders he'll buy them out for $105 a share. The stockholders are pleased but decide not to sell. Suddenly, Cajun food falls out of favor. Cajurama is still doing well, but the owners are worried, so they go to another potential buyer and say they want to sell. This buyer offers them just $70 a share since he knows that in the future the restaurants won't be able to make as much money selling blackened redfish. No other buyer will pay more. So, overnight, the value of the chain has fallen by one-third. Instead of paying $15 for every $1 of earnings, investors are only willing to pay $10, fearing that, in the future, earnings may fall.

That is what happened early last week. Just as one-third the value of the Cajun restaurant evaporated, more than a trillion dollars vanished from the value of the world's large corporations. What was the cause? Pick one: the rejection of Judge Bork (the *Wall Street Journal*'s favorite), the budget deficit, the trade deficit, declining international monetary cooperation, rising interest rates, Jim Baker's big mouth, David Ruder's big mouth. After all, the value of Cajurama can fall because of macroeconomic conditions (fear of a recession, say) as well as micro ones (the declining popularity of blackened redfish). One thing about crashes is that they can become self-fulfilling prophecies. A huge drop in stock prices may be the result of worries about a recession, and there is a good chance that the drop itself will produce a recession.

Many of the big-deal forces played a role in the Monday massacre, but it's more important to understand that markets are existential; they have their own internal logic, or illogic. They go down simply because they are too high.

For the past year or two, in the back of the mind of every investor has been the notion that stocks are too high. But prices kept rising, and who wanted to ruin the fun? Anyway, if prices started to go down, investors figured they could always get out before the real damage. Then on Monday, as the market headed down, everyone headed for the exit at once, and investors panicked, screaming to get out at any price.

In a week the Dow had fallen 1,000 points, or about one-third. But, as horrifying as that might sound, it was only getting back to where it started a year ago, and it was still more than twice as high as when the bull market started in August 1982.

Foreign exchanges have risen even more in the past year. The Australian market fell 25 percent on Tuesday, but before the decline it had been up 82 percent for the year. The Hong Kong exchange, which suspended trading until Friday, had been up 87 percent; Singapore, 76 percent; Spain, 57 percent; Japan, 46 percent. So which is crazier—that the total value of the world's public corporations has risen by more than half in a year, or that the value declined by a fifth in a day?

An easier way of seeing how high stocks have been is to look at individual companies. If you had the guts on Tuesday morning, you were looking for bargains. But there weren't too many to be found, even after the Dow had fallen 22 percent. Apple was down nearly 12 points (25 percent) on Monday, but it was still trading at 23 times earnings; that is, you had to pay $23 for every $1 of Apple profits, a return on investment of barely four percent. AT&T was off more than 6 points (20 percent), but it was trading at 17 times earnings. Gannett dropped 10; it was off by nearly one-half from its high for the year, but it was still trading at 18 times earnings.

Before the crash, the price-to-earnings ratio of the Standard & Poor's 500-stock index was 22. The decline brought it to around 16, exactly where it was a year ago—and still high by historic standards. The yield (that is, total dividends as a percentage of total stock prices) on the Dow was 2.61 percent at the market peak two months ago, one of the lowest levels ever seen in history. Richard Russell, publisher of *Dow Theory Letters*, predicted in an article in *Barron's* that appeared two days before Monday's crash that historically bull markets give up one-half of their total gains. If this bull market started running in 1974 when the Dow was 578, and it peaked in August at 2722, then it will fall to around 1650. Not even Russell expected that that would almost happen in a single day.

One of the worst things about a crash is that it makes everyone a moralist. The question is not value, but values—living beyond our means, not cooperating, etc. My own piece of moralizing is that the crash could have a salutary effect. It reminds us that it's only money, and that it can be gone in a flash, for reasons beyond our control, no matter how brilliant we are. Sir Isaac Newton, probably the smartest man who ever lived, lost 13,000 pounds in the South Sea Bubble. Still, in America, money is all we've got. Tocqueville wrote, "When the prestige attached to what is old has vanished. . . there is thus hardly anything left but money which makes very clear distinctions between men."

So maybe financial insanity is not as funny as Galbraith thinks. In a way, panics are pathetic. They say to us that our grip on "prestige" and everything else that matters is based on a phantom that, one bright Monday, can flee for the land of lost buttons and keys, leaving us all alone. No wonder we're scared.

JAMES K. GLASSMAN

How Arias can earn his prize.

OSCAR'S NOBEL

THE ODDS ARE still against it, but Costa Rican president Oscar Arias just might end up deserving his Nobel Peace Prize. He has given gratifying early indications that he will not rest on his laurels and settle for mere token moves toward democracy and stability in Central America, but will demand substantial action, especially from the

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Sandinista government of Nicaragua. However, Arias needs help from Washington, and he is getting all too little of it. Both the Reagan administration and Democratic leaders in Congress are giving verbal support to his peace plan but actually are engaging in their usual combat over aid for the Nicaraguan *contras*. What's needed is a bipartisan third force dedicated to seeing that the terms of the Arias plan are fulfilled—and willing to recommend sanctions if the Nicaraguans renege. If there is a better sanction than continued *contra* aid, perhaps the third force could devise it.

CYNICS IN Costa Rica and elsewhere thought that a Nobel Prize was the limit of Arias's ambitions. After he won it—"prematurely," they said (and so did I)—the cynics thought Arias would be so invested in the success of his initiative that he would declare victory no matter what Nicaragua did, and go home. Instead, Arias gave an interview to Stephen Kinzer of the *New York Times* on October 14, just hours after the award announcement, in which he urged the Sandinistas to negotiate directly with the *contras* about a cease-fire, which they adamantly have refused to do.

He said that if there is no cease-fire agreement, his peace plan would fail. In that case, he said, Honduras could not be expected to close down *contra* supply camps and stop clandestine supply flights. He urged Congress not to approve new *contra* aid while the peace plan is in effect (its deadline is November 7), but he did not make a point of barring it forever. Arias opposes *contra* aid on principle but usually acknowledges he has no power to decide what the United States should do.

In his interview, Arias made it clear in other ways that he was not settling for gestures from the Sandinistas, but wants real movement toward democracy. He urged the Sandinistas to institute a broad amnesty for opponents, including "the largest number of political prisoners," and said that "opening *La Prensa* and the Catholic radio station was important, but it is not enough. There should be other press outlets, and television should not be a government monopoly." So far, the Sandinistas have been unwilling to go beyond amnesty for individual *contras* or unit commanders who surrender. Opposition leaders say there are about 10,000 political prisoners in Nicaraguan jails. Meanwhile, opposition businessmen have applied for permission to open an independent television station, but the government has not responded.

Arias is going beyond interviews to advance his plan. When *contra* leaders shrewdly announced that they planned to fly to Managua to negotiate directly with the Sandinistas, Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega declared that they would be arrested at the airport when they arrived. Arias reportedly has offered to allow the *contras* to depart from Costa Rica, to assign one of his ministers to accompany them, and to have the Costa Rican Embassy in Managua make arrangements for the *contras'* activities.

In Washington, the Reagan administration at first called the Arias plan "fatally flawed." Lately the administration seems resigned to the plan as a reality and pleasantly surprised that Arias is proving a tough peacemaker. But the administration is still anticipating Sandinista failure to comply and hoping to leverage that into renewed military aid for the *contras*. After November 7 the administration is planning a campaign for the *contras* that one official termed "hard hardball" against Democrats in Congress.

Democratic leaders, meanwhile, were ecstatic at first about the Arias plan because at last it gave them a positive Central America policy to stand behind while they cut off aid to the *contras*. But now the Democrats are not backing Arias, as he insists on real Sandinista compliance with the plan. Nor are they joining him in criticizing the Sandinistas for half-measures. What the Democrats want from him is his opposition to *contra* aid—period. According to Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, "a lot of people in Congress are more interested in killing off *contra* aid than in democracy. The Democrats are to the left of Arias. He's serious about the treaty. They are not."

Administration allies cite the case of Senator Christopher Dodd, who urged Daniel Ortega not to travel to Moscow on November 7, as planned, in order to deemphasize the Sandinistas' Communist identity. Ortega and Interior Minister Tomas Borge both told Dodd that the Soviet Union was a fraternal ally and aid donor that they did not intend to slight. Dodd also promoted with Nicaraguan leaders the idea of replacing Roman Catholic Cardinal Obando y Bravo, a Sandinista critic, as intermediary in talks with the *contras*. Dodd's candidate was former Venezuelan president Luis Herrera Campins. Dodd denied these ideas were intended to help the Sandinistas escape full compliance with the Arias plan. He said he privately urged the Sandinistas to offer a general amnesty and otherwise fulfill the Arias plan.

In a clearer case, Democratic Representative Peter Kostmayer of Pennsylvania assured Ortega that he need only open *La Prensa* and Radio Católica to achieve a *contra* cutoff. Senator Tom Harkin urged Ortega to open *La Prensa* for similar reasons, and advised its publisher, Violeta Chamorro, to accept military censorship. (Harkin claims, though, that he conveyed her refusal to Sandinista officials and is responsible for getting them to allow the paper to open prior to November 7 and without censorship.) House Speaker Jim Wright makes it clear that no matter what the Sandinistas do, he does not favor renewed military funding of the *contras*, only humanitarian aid for their resettlement. He said that Arias believes the threat of economic boycotts and political disapproval by European and Latin countries is sufficient to compel the Sandinistas to behave, and he agrees.

AT THE same time there is total disbelief in Congress that the Reagan administration has any interest in democracy in Nicaragua, and widespread conviction that its only genuine goal is a *contra* military victory. Administration officials insist they favor *contra* aid as an "insurance policy" in the event of Sandinista non-compliance, but as one moderate Democratic leader put it, "If we put military aid in escrow, the administration would cheat and play

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games in order to get the money released. I put no faith in the honesty of the administration."

Expecting no cooperation from Congress, pro-*contra* activists in the administration are hoping that President Reagan will conduct an all-out campaign after November 7 for $270 million in military aid. If Democrats attach mere humanitarian assistance to a supposedly "non-vetoable" bill such as a continuing resolution to keep the federal government operating, the activists hope that Reagan will veto it. They hope Reagan will go on national television and say that defeat for *contra* aid will doom infant democracies elsewhere in Central America, and make the Democrats responsible for it. "The clearer the choice," said one official, "the greater chance we have of winning. We want the Democrats to pull the plug and take the heat. We won't help them."

Will the White House go along with such maximum hardball, especially with the president weakened by the crashing stock market and the loss on the Bork nomination? "Robert Bork may be the salvation of the Nicaraguan *contras*," said one official. "Conservatives are so mad at Howard Baker for the Bork thing that he'll have to go all out for the *contras*."

Given the distrust between the administration and Democratic leaders, there needs to be a third force that will monitor the Arias plan, construct a checklist for compliance, visit the region repeatedly, and scour the private sector and the federal budget for money to aid democrats in the region. One such group actually does exist, Central American Peace and Democracy Watch, launched by a group of sometime *contra* supporters who think that the Arias plan might work to change the Nicaraguan government and save democracy in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.

"The United States has given these democracies great moral authority," said one committee organizer, Penn Kemble of Prodemca. "Now that they've agreed to this peace plan, why should we treat them as though they lack the backbone to stand up to dictatorship?" The Watch group has collected a budget of $80,000 from private sources, has a letterhead of 60, topped by former Virginia Governor Chuck Robb and New York Mayor Ed Koch, is organizing several inspection trips to Central America, and plans to equip democratic opposition groups in Nicaragua with mimeograph machines, typewriters, tape recorders, cameras, and one or two cars. One Watch organizer, Nina Shea of the Puebla Institute, has drafted a 57-point list of steps that the Sandinistas should meet to comply with the Arias plan.

WHAT NO FACTION has done is to say what happens if the Sandinistas fail to live up to the Arias plan. Administration officials say that Arias tells them he would be willing to go to the Organization of American States and request sanctions under the Rio Treaty—that is, U.S. military intervention—which they say will never be approved. Democrats say Arias will merely denounce the Sandinistas and call for economic sanctions. Americans certainly ought to be clear about what Arias *will* do and what the United States will do. The administration answer is to hold the *contras* in reserve because that's a better alternative to direct U.S. military action. If that's not the best solution, what is?

MORTON M. KONDRACKE

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

DEAD DUCK

THE STOCK MARKET was down 120 points when President Reagan and his senior aides gathered in the Roosevelt Room for their weekly issues lunch on October 19, Black Monday. Beryl Sprinkel, the soon-to-depart chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, delivered a gloomy report on the crash. It's more than a "correction" of an overpriced market and should be taken very seriously, he told the president. The economy could be badly harmed. But Howard Baker, the White House chief of staff, took a different tack, catering to Reagan's eagerness for upbeat news. Not to worry, he said. All the computerized trading will probably reverse itself soon and begin driving up stock prices. In a few weeks the market will be back where it was. Reagan left the lunch reassured. The Dow plunged 388 more points that afternoon.

Lame duck is too kind a term for the Reagan White House. True, Reagan's second term is winding down and his political clout has dwindled. This is normal lame duckery, of the sort the Eisenhower administration experienced in the late 1950s. But the troubles of Reagan and his team are far worse than is normal and are mostly self-inflicted. Reagan and his aides are out of touch. They are constantly surprised by events—by the crash, by the rashness of Iran in the Persian Gulf, by the opposition to Robert Bork's nomination for the Supreme Court. Worse, the Reagan crowd can no longer carry out the simplest task effectively. Their botches in the Bork fight were numerous. And maybe worse still, the Reagan White House is dispirited and defeatist, an unhappy place to work. Reagan's tone is now sometimes bitter, which is new for him. Baker is in a funk, missing meetings and talking little in those he attends. Senior officials are caught up in the poisonous ritual of blaming each other for this or that fiasco.

Blame for the Bork defeat is tossed out in all directions. Some White House aides imply that Reagan is responsible because he insisted on nominating Bork in the first place in the face of a hostile post-Iranamok environment. Of course none of these aides advised against going with Bork, who is also blamed. "He came across as cold in the hearings," says a senior official. "He needed to cite personal references, personal anecdotes, something about himself. But he didn't. When he was asked about women and blacks, he answered with legal precedents. He needed to

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be more personal." But if that's what the White House wanted, it should have nominated Ollie North. Bork is also criticized for waffling on whether to be interviewed on TV by Barbara Walters (he decided against it), for failing to turn off Len Garment, the Washington lawyer who worked noisily for the nomination, and even for complaining about the lack of a White House effort on his behalf.

But why shouldn't he have complained? White House aides now concede their effort was pathetic. The president didn't get involved until the nomination was belly up. The top White House officials, namely Baker and his deputy, Kenneth Duberstein, never took charge. And there was no master strategy. Meetings dealt with trivial issues. At one session, White House and Justice Department officials wrangled over who would write pro-Bork "talking points" to be handed out to Republican senators. The argument was irrelevant. The talking points were never used.

Getting Reagan on television with a national plea for Bork's confirmation took more than two months. Justice officials began urging a TV talk within weeks after the nomination was announced last July. Their first proposal was to have Reagan address the nation just before the Judiciary Committee hearings began in September. That was nixed. The White House didn't start considering a speech until late September, when the odds had already shifted against Bork. Even then, it took more than two weeks to get Reagan on the air.

The speech wouldn't have been given at all if Bork hadn't surprised the White House by deciding to proceed, though a Senate majority had declared against him. White House aides didn't learn of Bork's decision until 15 minutes before Bork told Reagan on October 9. "It was like an atom bomb had dropped," says a senior official. "People were shocked and horrified that this albatross would still be around their necks." When they finally picked a day for a speech, October 14, an official quietly checked with the TV networks about running it live that evening. No way, the networks said. So the White House requested network time in the afternoon. That too was rebuffed (CNN ran it). The speech was flat. "I am determined to fight right down to the final ballot on the Senate floor," said Reagan. Really? The day before in a speech in New Jersey, the president said he had "no illusions" of winning. And two days before that, Baker publicly called the nomination dead.

That was one of many embarrassing episodes. Another was the failure to secure the public endorsement of Bork by former Senator Russell Long of Louisiana, an important figure among Southern Democrats. Long had told Baker that he favored Bork. Baker passed along this information to aides and said Long, whose office is literally a stone's throw from the White House, should be contacted. But no one got back to Long, and he never voiced public support for Bork.

Another embarrassment involved the New Jersey speech on October 13. As is common practice, the White House handed out an advance text to reporters the evening before. It was the wrong text, one that had been prepared four or five days earlier. It had very tough language, including the charge that "liberal special interests have declared a war of conquest on the American system of justice." The problem was that the plan for the speech changed once Bork declined to withdraw and urged a lowering of voices on both sides. Tom Griscom, the White House communications director, took the initial text home for the weekend. He worked on it on October 12, a holiday, softening Reagan's language. Before he got the revised text to the White House, the tougher text had been released. Some reporters thought this was a clever ploy by the White House to have it both ways. Sorry, but the Reagan crowd isn't that creative.

Disenchantment with the performance of Baker and his subordinates broke into the open when Senate GOP conservatives met with Reagan on October 15 in the Roosevelt Room. Senator James McClure of Idaho told Reagan he knew Reagan was getting advice at the White House not to nominate another conservative to the Supreme Court. Don't listen to that advice, McClure said. Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa asked that he and others be consulted before the next nomination is made. Last time, Baker conferred only with two Democrats, Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd and Senator Joseph Biden, Grassley groused. All this was hardly music to Baker's ears. He left the meeting before it was over.

The air of unreality and isolation at the White House was evident at the state dinner for President José Napoleón Duarte of El Salvador on October 13. The entertainer for the evening, Lionel Hampton, couldn't recall Duarte's country, calling it "that great foreign country down there." At dinner, Reagan sat between Mrs. Duarte and Nien Cheng, who has written about her travails during the Cultural Revolution. Across from the president, in a row, were Cal Ripken Jr., the baseball player; Miss America; and Richard Perle, who recently stepped down as an assistant secretary of defense. (Mrs. Reagan sat at a separate table between President Duarte and Ralph Lauren.) Reagan spent much of the dinner talking about the fulfillment of biblical prophecy in the Middle East and elsewhere, and about his discussions with a theologian on the subject. Nothing was said, though, about prophecies of economic collapse.

FRED BARNES

SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

DYING FOR DRUGS

EVERY WEEK I get dozens of expensive, glossy press releases suggesting that I do a report for NBC on some drug or medical device. Often these are awaiting approval by the Food and Drug Administration. Usually a phone call follows from a representative of the public relations company. Perhaps I would like to meet with one of the chief

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scientists in the project who would just happen to be in New York at my convenience.

Pitches to science and medical reporters have been one tiny part of the attempts to gain approval for and to sell drugs for many years. Such campaigns have always been vigorous because of the enormous potential profits. But recently many of the press releases have included strident language, reflecting a new militancy toward the FDA. There are not only demands that the agency should approve a certain drug but accusations that it has failed in its obligation to do so, and thus possibly caused innocent people to suffer or die.

Hardly anyone on any side of an issue concerning the FDA finds the agency blameless. But it is difficult to support the increasingly popular notion that the FDA is holding back drugs of great value.

THE YOUNGEST thalidomide baby soon will be 25. As memories of that tragedy fade, so does the desire it engendered for extreme caution in the drug approval process. Combine that with the Reagan era adoration of deregulation and the result is predictable. But pressure on the FDA has also increased recently because of two other factors. One is the desire for AIDS drugs. The other, not so obvious, is the emergence of new biotechnology firms. The future of one of these firms often depends on approval of a single drug.

Any day now, FDA Commissioner Frank Young is expected to announce his decision on TPA, a blood clot dissolving drug manufactured by the Genentech corporation. Many in the financial community await it. On May 29 a panel of distinguished academic physicians that advises the commissioner recommended 8-to-1 against approval of TPA. The next day the stock market was open Genentech dropped $11.50 to $36.75, losing more than a fifth of its value. The day before the panel met, a *Wall Street Journal* editorial urged approval of TPA, calling it "the most noteworthy unavailable drug in America." After the decision the *Journal* said that the advisory panel had "decided to sacrifice thousands of American lives on an altar of pedantry."

One wonders whether the *Journal*'s editorial vehemence might have been directed against an advisory panel decision (which is not binding on the commissioner) if it had concerned a product submitted by an established pharmaceutical company with a wide range of products. Genentech needed that approval badly, and thousands of Americans own stock in Genentech.

When Genentech stock first went public in 1980 many believed that genetic engineering would replace computer technology as the hottest new investment. Genentech shares rose faster than any stock in history—from 35 to 88 in 20 minutes. Over the next several years investor enthusiasm for all biotechnology companies waned as it became clear that inserting genes into bacteria did not create new marketable products as quickly as making new types of silicon chips. But interest in Genentech picked up again as the company first cloned the gene for, and then produced, tissue plasminogen activator, or TPA.

TPA is intended to dissolve blood clots in the coronary arteries, which are the cause of heart attacks. If the patient makes it to the hospital, the doctor can inject the blood clot dissolver. Normal circulation to the heart returns more quickly, thus limiting heart muscle damage.

TPA is not the only drug that accomplishes this so-called thrombolytic therapy. Four other compounds are also undergoing clinical trials. One of them, Streptokinase, which is manufactured by Hoechst, a German pharmaceutical company, was recommended for marketing by the advisory panel on the same day the panel rejected TPA. But in publicity aimed at physicians and analysts, Genentech had managed to convey the impression that TPA was by far the best of the drugs under study and the one most likely to be approved. Because the company reportedly had been planning to market the drug for $2,000 a dose, some analysts predicted TPA would be the second billion-dollar-a-year drug. (Tagamet, an ulcer treatment sold by SmithKline Beckman, was the first.)

When the advisory panel considered the data submitted by Genentech on the safety and efficacy of TPA, the members did not share the enthusiasm of the company and the *Wall Street Journal*. In a letter to the *Journal*, members said they simply "could not confidently identify significant benefits without concomitant significant risks." Among the risks, they noted that at the highest doses TPA caused cerebral hemorrhage in two to four percent of the patients, "in many cases leading to both severe stroke and death."

In the months since the advisory panel meeting, Genentech has submitted additional data on TPA, and if Young does approve the drug, he may have better justification than the panel could find. But during the same time, the financial prospects for TPA have lessened. Genentech lost a patent suit in Britain over the drug that will force the company to lower the price it charges. In addition, many physicians who have studied the issue now question the value of TPA over Streptokinase and other thrombolytic agents. In any case, it is clear that the story is not bureaucratic constipation in FDA headquarters keeping a miracle drug from the market. Instead it is the false expectations created by the investment community searching desperately for the miracles of genetic engineering.

THE BIGGEST ASSAULT on the FDA occurred recently when the California legislature unanimously passed and Governor George Deukmejian signed a bill creating what will be, in effect, California's own FDA. The rhetoric accompanying this measure indicates frustration with the Washington FDA's speed in approval of drugs to treat AIDS. One company that hopes to benefit from this new law, and that lobbied for its passage, is ICN of Costa Mesa, California, which through a subsidiary, Viratek, makes a drug called Ribaviran.

The FDA more than once has refused to approve Ribaviran as a treatment for AIDS. It is one of the many drugs in the "AIDS underground." Patients or their friends and relatives travel to Mexico and elsewhere to buy Ribaviran as well as other compounds they believe—or at least hope—

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will be effective. ICN has pushed hard to get approval for Ribaviran. Approval would mean millions of dollars for the tiny firm, which has few other products. But based on the data submitted, the FDA has concluded that there simply is not enough evidence that Ribaviran works.

Complaints about the approval process for AIDS drugs generally fall into two categories. Many people and organizations say there should be more clinical trials involving more patients to find out what if anything is an effective treatment. It is hard to argue with that.

But others contend that because people with AIDS have a fatal illness they should have the right to purchase any treatment they desire. Although that argument is understandable, it lacks logic. If patients are taking any number of combinations of drugs that are unproven, no one will know what works. The prime beneficiaries will be the drug companies allowed to sell unproven products to desperate people whose financial resources are already drained by other medical costs.

The new California FDA will not help. Legislators and the governor backed it because it was an easy way to appear to be helping people with AIDS. But the law calls for the same standards for approval that the federal government must apply. What the California FDA will mostly do is use up money that could be more beneficially spent on direct help to people with AIDS.

Claims from individual patients that they have been helped by a drug do not prove much. Neither do glossy press releases or the expectations of investors. Only clinical trials can establish the safety and efficacy of a drug. And those take a long time.

ROBERT BAZELL

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(And Texas.)

IRANAMOK AND OPEC

THE PRICE OF OIL had dropped to $9.10 by the summer of 1986. On August 1 a handful of Republican House members from hard-hit oil states met at the White House with President Reagan's national security adviser, John Poindexter. These representatives had been demanding help for oil companies in their districts because of Saudi Arabia's decision nine months earlier to drive the world price to a 12-year low. The Saudi policy was a product of the bloody six-year-old war between Iran and Iraq. The price of oil seemed beyond control of the men assembled in the West Wing of the White House. While a windfall to the rest of the United States, the low price caused unemployment, bankruptcies, and foreclosures in Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma.

Poindexter turned the briefing over to another NSC official, Lucian S. Pugliaresi, who gave the congressmen a startling tip. "What would you think of $18 oil?" Pugliaresi said.

A thought flashed through the mind of Texas Representative Beau Boulter, he later recalled. "I asked myself, 'Do they know something I don't?' "

MAYBE THEY DID. Three days after the White House meeting, the world price of oil jumped 50 percent, the start of a steady climb to $18. It was caused by a development that stunned experts on the international oil cartel. At an August 4 OPEC meeting in Geneva, Iran suddenly ended its five-year-old feud with Saudi Arabia. In a compromise that revived the cartel's ability to control prices, Iran agreed to a Saudi plan to share production cutbacks and end the world oil glut. And the Saudis began capping the wells that had flooded the world with cheap oil.

Iran's decision at Geneva took place on the very same day as the implementation of Reagan's order—relayed by Poindexter—to ship $6.5 million worth of American-made spare parts for the Khomeini government's Hawk antiaircraft batteries. The Hawk parts arrived in Tehran only hours after the Iranian oil minister, Qolam Reza Aghazadeh, agreed to the compromise at Geneva to set production quotas—even though Iran's enemy, Iraq, got special treatment and was exempt. According to the Tower Commission, Aghazadeh was also the Iranian paymaster for U.S. arms shipments and a contact for the American middleman in the secret deals, Manucher Ghorbanifar.

The Khomeini government desperately wanted these electronic bits and pieces, obtainable only from Pentagon supplies. The Hawks were needed to repel a surprisingly sophisticated strategic bombing campaign by Iraq. Using French Mirage F-1 fighter-bombers, Iraq had crippled Iran's ability to export oil. Iraq had paid for the new planes and pilot training with money supplied by Saudi Arabia. Making things worse was Saudi Arabia's decision in October 1985 to teach Iran a painful lesson for its defiance at OPEC meetings. Saudi King Fahd began swamping the world with Saudi oil, a deliberate overproduction policy that sent the world price on a downward spiral. This one-two punch had reduced the Khomeini government's oil revenues by $10 billion a year, from $16 billion in 1985 to $6 billion in 1986.

Reviving the Hawk network to protect Iranian oil assets was a key aspect of Reagan's back-alley diplomacy with the Khomeini government. But the oil connection is an aspect of the Iranamok scandal that both the Democratic Congress and the Republican administration have been slow to pursue. The details of a potential quid pro quo—higher oil prices for Hawk parts and other favors—could prove embarrassing for members of both parties who are seeking to increase U.S. energy prices through import fees and other dodges.

But the circumstantial evidence is strong. Reagan approved Israeli sales of Hawk missiles to Tehran in November 1985—two months after the Iraqi air attacks began on

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Iranian oil terminals. But the missiles were termed obsolete and returned by Iran, according to the Tower Commission. After the first American-Iranian meetings in Europe in 1986, the Khomeini government raised the Hawk issue again. "The most urgent requirement that Iran had was to place their current Hawk missile inventory in working condition," said a document prepared for Reagan by Oliver North at the direction of his boss, Poindexter.

Pentagon intelligence officials say Iran had reactivated a significant number of the estimated 700 Hawk systems by last December. By January more than 20 Iraqi jets had been downed, mainly by Hawks. Nizar Hamdoon, who recently left Washington as Iraq's ambassador, said the Iranian Hawks had forced the Baghdad government to curtail its air war. "The Hawks have had an impact," Hamdoon said.

WHILE ATTENTION HAS focused on Reagan's failures in the arms-for-hostages scandal—there are as many hostages as ever, "moderates" have not come to power in Tehran—last year's healing of the breach between Saudi Arabia and Iran must be counted as a success for those members of the Reagan administration who wanted higher oil prices.

Until Iran turned cooperative at that Geneva meeting, OPEC had been crippled by the feud between Riyadh and Tehran that had sent prices plummeting. Iran, leader of OPEC mavericks including Algeria, Libya, and Nigeria, refused to cut back production despite a worldwide oil glut caused by non-OPEC producers and Western energy conservation programs. At Geneva, Iran in effect ended five years of opposition to a Saudi plan to reduce production, dry up the glut, and restore OPEC's power.

Tensions between Iran and the Saudis had risen sharply in February 1986 when Iran threatened a ground attack of both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. A surprise Iranian offensive that month left Khomeini forces occupying the southern tip of Iraq, blocking Baghdad's access to the Persian Gulf at Fao, and threatening Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. An estimated 35,000 Revolutionary Guards on the Fao peninsula were only 25 miles from the Kuwaiti border. Iraq is estimated to have lost more than 10,000 troops before dropping efforts to dislodge the Guards.

The Fao offensive did not surprise the White House. Only two weeks earlier Reagan secretly approved supplying Iran with CIA intelligence about Iraq. According to CIA documents, the Khomeini government was given "a map depicting the order of battle on the border showing units, troops, tanks, electronic installations, and what have you." At a meeting with Poindexter, Deputy CIA Director John McMahon objected to giving Iran this information. "We are giving the Iranians the wherewithal for offensive action," McMahon wrote on January 25, 1986. This was prescient. It was the installation of Silkworm missiles in the Fao peninsula that enabled Iran to hit two tankers, one American-owned and one American-flagged, at the Kuwaiti oil terminal in October.

The Khomeini government offensive raised new doubts about Iraq's survival. It directly threatened the two nations, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, that had supplied cash and Soviet military supplies to the Baghdad government. "Iran will no longer accept that your [Saudi] ports [in Kuwait] should receive arms for Iraq and that Iraqi oil pipelines should pass through your territory," said Hojatolislam Hashemi Rafsanjani after the attack. The Speaker of the Iranian Parliament warned the two nations that Iranian troops would be poised at their borders—as they are now—"for a long time."

Two months later Vice President George Bush arrived on a controversial state visit to Saudi Arabia. According to Saudi officials, King Fahd knew about Reagan's intelligence support for the Iranian invasion of Fao. How? From Saudi superbusinessman Adnan Khashoggi, who brokered the secret U.S.-Iranian diplomacy from its inception. Saudi officials say Fahd complained harshly to Bush.

But Bush had his own complaint—the low price of oil. "I think it is essential that we talk about stability [of world oil prices] and that we just not have a continued free fall like a parachutist jumping without a parachute," Bush said at an April 1 news conference before his meeting with Fahd. At the time Bush's comments seemed a dramatic departure from administration policy. The Treasury and State departments had hailed the Saudi overproduction when it started in 1985 as beneficial to the United States and other industrialized nations. During the 1986 congressional campaigns, Reagan repeatedly bragged about lower prices at the neighborhood gas station. But the vice president's line was quickly endorsed by Energy Secretary John Herrington, who also adopted the prevailing euphemism of price "stability." (A spokesman for Herrington said he knew nothing about the White House's secret dealing with Iran at the time.)

The middleman in the Iran deal, Ghorbanifar, knew that Bush's position would please the Khomeini government. In a letter to Aghazadeh, his contact in Tehran, outlining Reagan's support of Iranian goals, Ghorbanifar referred to the administration's "opposition to the decrease in oil prices. . . . So much so, that George Bush the vice president, on two occasions during speeches and interviews announced the reduction in oil prices would ultimately be harmful for the United States and that oil prices should increase." A month after this letter was sent, the Iranian oil minister cut the deal at the OPEC meeting in Geneva.

IT IS POSSIBLE that nine-dollar oil—and the distress this caused not only in Iran but in Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana—had nothing to do with Reagan's otherwise bungled attempts to free Americans held hostage by Iranian-backed terrorists in Lebanon. But the question was never raised by Oklahoma Senator David Boren, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, which took the first hard look at the Iran-*contra* scandal. Nor did it occur to former Texas Senator John Tower as head of the presidential commission on the scandal.

Arthur Liman, chief counsel of the congressional Iran-*contra* committee, stumbled onto the oil connection, but not in time to question witnesses publicly about the coincidence between the Hawk shipments and Iran's surprise

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decision at OPEC. Poindexter, Pugliaresi, North, Howard Teicher, and others were pursued on the connection in Liman's closed-door inquiries, but it's not clear what Liman's pursuit will yield. The joint committee's report later this month may answer that question, but recent committee talk of "protecting the national interest" on this sensitive issue may mean the full story will never be known. Even though this may be the one aspect of the Iranamok policy that actually succeeded, no one seems especially eager to brag about it.

PATRICK J. SLOYAN

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Did Liz Taylor's guru fund the 'contras'?

THE SWAMI OF IRANAMOK

BY MICHAEL ISIKOFF AND MARK HOSENBALL

LAST DECEMBER supermarket shoppers around the country were treated to a stunning revelation about the world's latest faith healing wonder. A front-page story in the *National Enquirer* told how a 38-year-old hirsute holy man named Chandra Swami had miraculously cured the debilitating illness of beloved movie actress Elizabeth Taylor. "LIZ TELLS PALS: SWAMI SAVED MY LIFE!" screamed the *Enquirer*'s headline. Lending authority to the paper's account was a photograph of the corpulent Indian guru arm-in-arm with Liz, her then-squire George Hamilton, and the ubiquitous Saudi arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi.

This was the first report in the American press about the astonishing achievements of Shri Chandra Swamiji Maharaj, a religious leader who, according to his own literature, embodies the "love and faith of Jesus Christ and the universal brotherhood of the Prophet Muhammad." Using prestidigitation and feats of psychic power, the Hindi-speaking guru has circled the globe in recent years, gaining the confidence of world leaders such as the Sultan of Brunei, the (since deposed) prime minister of Fiji, ex-Philippine dictators Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, and Zairian president Mobutu Sese Seko, not to mention such glitterati as Taylor, Princess Stephanie of Monaco, tennis ace John McEnroe, and Ryan O'Neal. He claims to be very close to Richard Nixon.

But as impressive as the *Enquirer*'s scoop was, the paper's diligent scribes might have turned up an even more sensational story had they probed a little deeper. Less than a month earlier, the Swami and some of his close pals among the international jet set had become the subject of anxious discussions at the highest levels of the American government. As Khashoggi's spiritual adviser, the Swami appears to have been in on some of the critical financial arrangements that bankrolled the secret arms-for-hostage deals masterminded by National Security Council aide Lt. Col. Oliver North. There is even evidence—contained in a recently declassified top-secret CIA memo—that the Swami's cash may have helped to pay for some of the U.S. government's 1986 arms transactions—an investment that later led to a bizarre plot to blackmail William Casey's CIA.

While the Swami's connection to the Reagan administration's biggest foreign policy debacle may be obscure, and ultimately a sideshow to the main action, it deserves at least a footnote in the chronicles of Iranamok. The Iran-*contra* hearings already have documented the extent to which the administration was willing to deal with dubious characters, such as Richard Secord and alleged triple agent Manucher Ghorbanifar, to open up its channel to Iranian "moderates" and finance the Nicaraguan *contras*. But to appreciate fully the surreal milieu in which the arms deals were hatched, one needs to go even deeper—into the shadowy world of Chandra Swami Maharaj and his wealthy but credulous devotees.

Like the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, Chandra Swami is but one in a procession of Indian holy men to achieve brief international stardom. The Swami tells his disciples that he began his religious career when, at age 13, he was imprisoned by Indian authorities for agitating for fundamentalist Hindu causes, such as the protection of cows. He later made his way to the Himalayas, seeking "the true path of knowledge" while (he claims) living in a tree. From such meditations the Swami gleaned insights into the deep recesses of the human condition. "Material wealth is mere illusion," he would later proclaim. "What one needs is wealth of the spirit."

Yet the Swami has shown less interest in the wealth of the spirit than in the world of illusion. Indeed, the distinctive mark of the Swami's career, and one that sets him apart from run-of-the-mill saviors, is his decision to preach his message almost exclusively to the rich and powerful, with a particular concentration on Third World potentates, high-powered wheeler-dealers, and the flakier variety of

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show-business celebrity. The Swami surfaced in Indian press accounts several years ago as the confidant of high-ranking politicians in Indira Gandhi's Congress-I Party. But his first big break came in 1983 when, on a trip to Washington, he was introduced to Steve Martindale, an enterprising lawyer whose notable achievements on the capital's party circuit were immortalized some years back by Sally Quinn in the *Washington Post* Style section. The Swami quickly won Martindale's attention by performing one of his standard mind-reading tricks. The Swami asked Martindale to write down a name, telephone number, and secret wish and put the paper in his pocket. The Swami, recalls Martindale, guessed the contents to a tee, including Martindale's parents' phone number in Pocatello, Idaho. Martindale was dazzled. He says he saw the Swami perform the same trick for international leaders, sometimes in languages that the guru appeared not to know.

MARTINDALE SPENT much of the next three years escorting the Swami around Washington, introducing him to his wide circle of social contacts. He set up meetings with top Reagan administration officials, such as late Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige, former Agriculture Secretary John Block, and State Department protocol chief Selwa (Lucky) Roosevelt, as well as members of Congress, including Senators Don Riegle, Claiborne Pell, and William Cohen. Invariably, the Swami's squat sidekick and interpreter, known as the Mamaji, would tag along and take pictures of these historic sessions—incontrovertible proof of the Swami's growing reach and influence.

The black-bearded Swami cut a striking figure as he padded through Cabinet offices and the halls of Congress, garbed in a flowing white robe, sandals, and beaded necklace, his wrist adorned with a diamond-studded watch, his forehead decorated with a red dot. Marshall Lynam, administrative assistant to House Speaker Jim Wright, recalls that this strange-looking character came to the Capitol for at least two brief sessions with Wright, then majority leader. "Jim Wright is still enough of a Texan that he likes to say hello to anyone who cares to," Lynam explained when asked how the holy man came to be granted an audience.

The Swami had a different recollection of his relationship with Wright. In a rare interview last year with the Indian magazine *Onlooker*, the Swami claimed that he had arranged for Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi to address the Congress by contacting "my devotee Jim Wright." "Who is this Jim Wright?" asked the magazine's interviewer. "Majority leader," replied the Swami, "the most powerful man in the American parliament. He is such a follower of me that he will do anything for me."

Martindale says that most of the Washingtonians who exchanged pleasantries with the Swami were merely being polite, though these seemingly innocuous contacts would later be cited by an alarmed CIA as evidence of the Swami's vast political influence. There is little doubt, however, that the Swami was able to establish a more intimate relationship with some of the international leaders he met. One chief of state who was impressed was President Mobutu of Zaire, who was introduced to the Swami by Khashoggi in December 1985 at Mobutu's luxurious apartment on Avenue Foch in Paris. According to Martindale, who was there, this meeting occurred at a particularly stressful moment in Mobutu's life, since his witch doctor had been killed in a car crash two weeks earlier. The vulnerable Mobutu quickly fell under the Swami's spell, coming to rely on the holy man for guidance on which of his ministers should be trusted.

BY LATE 1985 the Swami, the Mamaji, and Martindale had become fixtures in Khashoggi's globe-trotting entourage, jetting across oceans and continents in the arms dealer's DC-8 and DC-9 and partying on his fantasy yacht, the Nabila. They also spent time at his sumptuous 5,000-acre Spanish estate, surrounded by a coterie of fawning attendants, call girls, and miscellaneous parasites. Numerous financial and political notables (such as the mysterious Ghorbanifar) floated in and out of this decadent mise-en-scène. Among those the Swami took more than a passing interest in were British mining tycoon Roland "Tiny" Rowland and the Sultan of Brunei, reputedly the world's richest man.

The Swami considered the Sultan one of his prize catches. "He is a very good friend of mine," the Swami told *Onlooker* magazine. "Very close. Do you know he has $25 billion? Yet he, a Muslim, worships me. . . . Even his wife worships me." Although precise details of the Swami-Sultan relationship must be left to historians, it was, at least for a time, authentic enough to sustain the fascination of Khashoggi and Martindale. Indeed, even as Martindale's belief in the Swami's spiritual powers began to wane, his interest in the Swami's apparent political connections grew: the Swami on several occasions arranged personal audiences for Martindale with the Sultan, sessions that the Swami promised would lead to a lucrative lobbying contract for Martindale representing the Sultan's tropical paradise in Washington.

Unfortunately for Martindale, the Sultan ultimately lost interest in raising his Washington profile, preferring instead to occupy himself in such diverting pursuits as polo, yachting, and financing the *contras*. Meanwhile, the Swami immersed himself in the convoluted and bitter struggle between Rowland and a family of Egyptians called the al-Fayeds over control of Harrods, the elegant London department store. Rowland has alleged that Mohamed al-Fayed (Khashoggi's ex-brother-in-law) paid the Swami $500,000 for an introduction to the Sultan. *Onlooker* claims that Rowland later paid $5 million to the Swami for secret tapes and documents proving that the Sultan financed the al-Fayeds' bid to take over Harrods. The facts remain murky. But brokering deals and collecting fees for arranging introductions to his powerful friends appears to have been one of the Swami's principal sources of income.

To manage his rapidly expanding financial portfolio, the Swami turned to Donald Fraser and W. Ernest Miller, two Canadian businessmen who eventually set him on the path to Iranamok. In the winter of last year, while his American holding company, Triad America Corp., was experiencing a

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financial squeeze, Khashoggi recruited Fraser and Miller to invest in his failing empire. One of Khashoggi's former lieutenants, Emanuel Floor, says that Miller was a devoted disciple of the Swami. Miller would clasp his hands and bow whenever he entered the holy man's presence, says Floor. The CIA took a slightly less beatific view of Miller and Fraser. In a 1986 memo to CIA Director Casey, Miller was described as a "tough and sleazy individual," and Fraser as "a financier who operates out of the Cayman Islands."

Floor says he flew with Khashoggi to the Caymans in March of last year to discuss with Miller and Fraser further financing for Khashoggi's troubled American company. At one point a dispute arose as to precisely how many millions the Canadians had invested with Khashoggi. According to recent testimony by Floor in a bankruptcy proceeding, only one person could resolve the dispute: "We had to get the guru on the telephone."

IT WAS DURING these meetings that Khashoggi, who by now was serving as Ghorbanifar's banker on arms deals with Tehran, persuaded the Canadians to put up $10 million toward financing yet another shipment of TOW missiles to the Ayatollah. Khashoggi promised the Canadians a profit of at least $1 million. But the deal was aborted in midstream when American officials grew wary of Ghorbanifar, the middleman who repeatedly failed CIA lie detector tests, registering deception on every question but "What is your name?" By October 1986 events were starting to spin out of control. On the surface, the Swami was still living it up, attending his 38th birthday party that was thrown by Khashoggi in Beverly Hills (now the Swami's U.S. headquarters) and celebrating with such luminaries as Cary Grant, Liz Taylor, Donald Nixon, Mary Hart, and Representative Mervyn Dymally. But beneath the surface, the Canadians were becoming distinctly nervous about their investment. Thus began the crude attempt to blackmail the administration, invoking, as one lever, the awesome power of Chandra Swami Maharaj.

All this might seem somewhat incredible were the facts not immortalized in CIA files recently released by congressional investigators. The files, buttressed by closed-door testimony before the Iran-*contra* committees, tell the following story: Khashoggi dispatched New York oilman Roy Furmark to the CIA's Langley, Virginia, headquarters. Furmark, who conveniently was an old friend of Director Casey and is alleged to have received an $80,000 "commission" on the arms deal, told agency officials that the Canadians felt they had been "swindled" and were about to go public unless they were made whole. Furmark claimed the Canadians had retained a high-priced Washington law firm to file suit against the U.S. government. They also were about to inform liberal Democrats on Capitol Hill about the administration's shenanigans, he warned.

Casey's senior advisers were petrified. "We have a festering sore for which no treatment has been prescribed," wrote Charles Allen, national intelligence officer and one of the agency's chief Iran analysts, in an October 14, 1986, memo to the CIA chief. "We face a disaster of major proportions." Three days later, in another memo to Casey, Allen reported Furmark's assessment that the Canadians were not to be trifled with. They "have a reputation for dealing roughly with those who do not meet their obligations," Allen stated.

Then, in a November 7 memo, Allen for the first time disclosed that another individual was "involved in the investment effort"—none other than the Canadians' financial angel, "a swami who lives in Los Angeles" and who "knows a number of prominent congressmen (Cranston was mentioned) and even advises the Sultan of Brunei." The Swami, in fact, was critical to the blackmail attempt. "In addition to bringing suit and exposing U.S. government involvement in the arms transactions, the Canadians intend to use the Swami to lobby key congressmen," Casey was warned.

As it turned out, events were already overtaking the blackmailers. That very week a Beirut newspaper published a strange story of a secret visit to Tehran by former national security adviser Robert McFarlane, bearing a Bible and a cake. The Khashoggi-Furmark-Canadian-Swami extortion threat soon became hollow. In addition, investigators for the congressional Iran-*contra* committees found no evidence that the Canadians ever retained a Washington law firm, much less filed suit. As for the Swami's vaunted political clout, it appears to have evaporated into thin air, much like the plotters themselves.

IN THE YEAR SINCE, the Canadians have successfully eluded the army of creditors, process servers, and investigators that has been seeking to decipher their role. Khashoggi has lost large chunks of his legendary fortune while his American companies have been mired in an interminable bankruptcy fight. A court-appointed examiner who looked into his affairs recently concluded that, even while they were financing America's diplomatic overtures to Iran, Khashoggi and the Canadians were running Triad America into the ground. "There is substantial evidence of fraud, dishonesty, incompetence, and gross mismanagement," the examiner wrote.

As for the Swami, he returned to India, where last month he was detained by tax inspectors in the southern city of Madras on suspicion of violating the country's foreign exchange regulations. According to Indian press accounts, the government wants to trace the sources of his apparently limitless access to foreign currency. The Swami, for his part, denied all wrongdoing and hinted darkly he would reveal embarrassing secrets about high officials if the authorities chose to press the case. "Let me tell those in power that my shoulders are very broad," said the Swami. "I can carry the weight of all sorts of allegations on them, but one day the truth will emerge."

Then, after posting bail, the Swami disappeared once again, saying he would be temporarily unavailable for police questioning. He said he was beginning a nine-day meditation on a diet of honey and water, during which time he would be observing a holy vow of silence except for brief religious discourses in the evening. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

A Banquet, A Baby, A Ballet

Ermanno Olmi established himself in the film firmament with two early films, *Il Posto* (1961) and *The Fiancées* (1963). Though he has done much since then, those two early works are his best. Some of his subsequent films have passages of interest, including his patent attempt at a magnum opus, *The Tree of the Wooden Clogs* (1979). But none of the later films has the wholeness, the sureness, the unpretentious originality of the first two. His latest picture is not a recovery.

Long Live the Lady!
(Sacis)

Baby Boom
(United Artists)

Dancers
(Cannon)

Long Live the Lady! is, in some sense, a remake of *Il Posto*. In the early film, a teenage youth gets a job in a huge Milanese factory and regards his complete absorption into the army of workers—the virtual end of his individuality—as the seal of success. In the new film, as overproduced as *Il Posto* is movingly spare, a youth is recruited by a grand hotel for training as a waiter. This youth breaks loose before he is swallowed up, but the sententious and fraudulent implications throughout rob the film of any joy at the youth's escape.

If Olmi's screenplay—as usual he has written his own—had concentrated on the youth, it might have generated some comedy and pathos even though the actor of the role is bland. But Olmi, more experienced these days and less wise, loads the first half hour with meaningless suspense, then continues with a hollow charade.

A group of six teenagers, four male and two female, arrives at a castle in the Italian Alps. It turns out to be a hotel, but Olmi's treatment of their arrival would suit a gothic horror film. We don't even know why they are there until we eventually see them in their uniforms. They are put to work helping at a large banquet given by a veiled old lady who speaks only in unheard whispers to her aide and who evidently has power over her guests. By and by we discover that this dinner is a meeting of the board of a large company, of which the old lady is the head. The byplay of the guests is tedious, the portentousness of the meeting is ineffectual, and all of it seems even worse when the banquet turns out to be only an occasion for the youth to learn that he doesn't want to be a waiter.

Olmi's two early films, done before he was 35, seemed auguries. They have augured little. He once seemed at the beginning of an important career whose purpose would be to dramatize the difficulties of humane life in crowded, jostling times. That purpose is not abandoned, as even *Lady* shows, but Olmi seems tired. And, being tired, he strains and imitates. *Lady* has reminders of Buñuel's satires of the bourgeoisie at the dinner table and of Fellini's ability to find the grotesque in the commonplace (close-ups of the ugly head of an immense fish prepared for the banquet). The youth in *Il Posto* slipped out of his true self into an imposed self. Olmi has slipped out of spontaneous honesty into professional honesty.

Sometimes the basic gimmick of a comedy leaves us with only one interest: not in how the story will be worked out but in whether the gags along the way will be good. Diane Keaton's new comedy, *Baby Boom*, is about a glitzy New York businesswoman who, through a farfetched twist, inherits a baby. It's hard to be entranced by the story as such; with the premise of a contrast between pow and Pablum, all we can care about is whether they have made the picture funny, moment by moment. *Baby Boom* succeeds well enough.

Nancy Meyers, who produced, and Charles Shyer, who directed, wrote the screenplay and have carpentered fairly neat obligatory sequences. The opening: a high-speed young woman exec, zinging along in her job, learning that she is in line for a partnership in a firm of management consultants. The bump: she goes out to Kennedy Airport to pick up a bequest from Britain and is handed a squirming bundle. The "recognition" scenes, to make the audience feel superior: she doesn't know how to put on a diaper, etc. The upset of her private life: her live-in lover can't take the baby, so takes off. The upset of her business life: her boss doesn't want anyone around who has distracting personal interests, so he maneuvers her out the door.

The script's only remaining job, a big one, is to get her from that point to the ending about an hour later when she has to be set in some new fulfilling life *and* has to have the baby too. This plot bridge is less predictable than the chunks that build up to it, and without the support of precedent, the second half of the script wobbles a bit. (The

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Stakeout. Richard Dreyfuss is funny and feisty as a detective assigned to watch a lovely young woman's apartment. Aidan Quinn supplies chills as the homicidal menace. (Reviewed 8/31/87)

Theme. A Soviet film, surprisingly delicate and surprisingly candid. A middle-aged playwright confronts his hopelessness and is possibly helped by a free-spirited young woman. The acting and directing are exceptionally fine. (10/26/87)

The Whistle Blower. Michael Caine grows. Here, as the father of a British Intelligence employee, he plunges into the cruel underworld of espionage. Intelligently written. (8/10&17/87)

Wish You Were Here. An English seaside town, 1951. Emily Lloyd is comic and moving as a headstrong girl making trouble for herself and others. The contrived ending is a bother, but the rest is vivid. (8/3/87)

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French film *Three Men and a Cradle*, soon to appear in an American version as *Three Men and a Baby*, is only one of many previous unexpected-baby pictures.) One surprise in the second half is a device that the zeitgeist seemed to have passed by: Back to the Simple Life, or I'll Shake Manhattan. Keaton buys a house in Vermont for herself and baby, runs into comic difficulties with country life, discovers a business she can run from that house, and meets the local veterinarian, single and sexy. The gags are a little more laborious in Vermont, but they keep coming and the film ends—ready?—happily.

Sam Shepard plays the vet. He is obviously not as much at ease in comedy as in more tense material, but he is such a cinema natural that he gives the film a shot just when it's needed. Keaton has her best comic role since *Annie Hall* and rings all the bells. It's less a performance than a polished merchandising job, D. Keaton Inc. Very Mod Mirthmaker; but she delivers—the quick starts, the self-interruptions, the bursts of amusement and perception as if her speech and features were trying to keep up with her racing mind. She decorates even slight scenes with a filigree of shtick. For instance, near the end, her old firm gives her a tremendous offer to return. She asks for a minute to think it over, steps into the ladies' room, and goes through a brief routine in front of the mirror, ending with a snap of the fingers, that makes the scene—in itself nothing—a bright bit.

Shyer directed with good old-fashioned competence, which was exactly what was needed. However, it would be refreshing to see a film set in the business world of Manhattan, or in any big American city, that did not open with shots of skyscrapers gleaming in the sun.

Mikhail Baryshnikov's film *Dancers* is about the making of a film of *Giselle* by an American ballet company in an Italian theater. The central device, as in Carlos Saura's *Carmen*, is that the star's private life mirrors the story of the ballet. The mirror is cracked. A mimetic silliness involving a newly arrived member of the corps de ballet—the maiden, Julie Kent—and Baryshnikov, the philandering star as philandering duke, is worked out clumsily, except of course that the film story does not end tragically.

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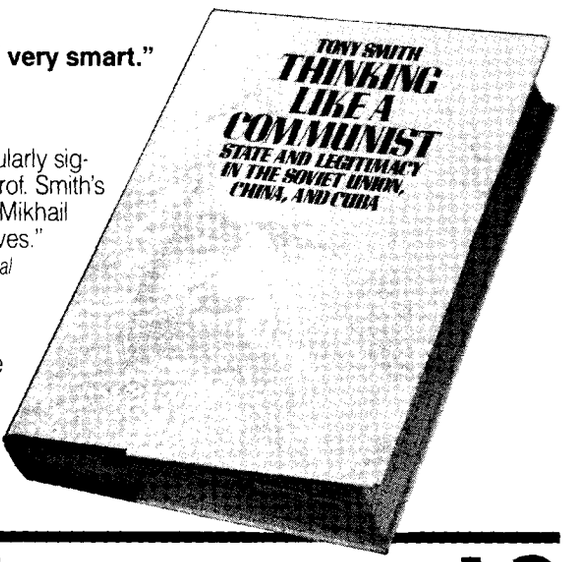

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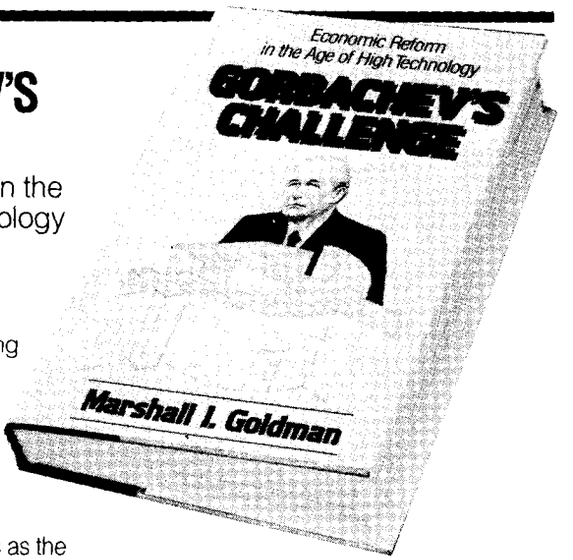

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Our reward for sitting through this nonsense ought to be the second act of *Giselle* well done. But, as my resident ballet expert confirms, the choreography has been chopped and shuffled. (The director was Herbert Ross, himself a former dancer and choreographer, who is as shameless as his star.) Some of Alessandra Ferri's Giselle is lovely, as is what remains of Baryshnikov's duke. If only he had the taste as a producer that he has as a dancer.

Who won the Spanish Civil War?

THE BARRICADES AND BEYOND

BY OCTAVIO PAZ

FIFTY YEARS AGO, on July 4, 1937, in the city of Valencia, the Second International Congress of Antifascist Writers began its work. The civil war that was rending Spain's cities and countryside had already become a world war of conscience. The Congress attracted writers from the four corners of the earth. Many were famous, and some were truly great; two were masters of mine in the art of poetry, others were friends, and all, in those inflamed days, were my comrades. We shared the same hopes and convictions, the same illusions and disappointments. We were united by a sense of moral outrage, and by solidarity with the oppressed. We were a brotherhood of indignation, but also a brotherhood of violence. Most are now dead. To recall them, I would trace the sign that appears on the statues of Harpocrates, a gesture in which the ancients saw the sign of silence. Silence means not forgetfulness, however, but acknowledgment: a moment of interior contemplation in which, wordlessly, we converse with the dead, and commune with their memories.

The date itself is both dark and luminous. Those summer days of 1937 are etched in our memories by figures at once passionate, intense, and contradictory; by affirmations that have become negations; by heroism and cruelty; clarity and obfuscation; loyalty and betrayal; the quest for liberty and the cult of a new despotism; independence of mind and clericalism. All of which comes down to a single question.

It would be presumptuous to suggest that we could answer it here; it is the very question that men have asked since the beginning of history, without being able to answer it completely. Still, we are obliged to ask it again with clarity, and to attempt to answer it with courage. We do not seek a final, definitive response, merely ideas, glimmers, suggestions. And we will need compassion and irony, the twin supreme forms of understanding. Irony connotes neither approval nor censure: it shares and sympathizes. Compassion suggests neither regret nor commiseration, but fraternity.

The question facing us can be posed in a number of different ways. Have we returned to Valencia to commemorate a victory or a defeat? In other words, who really won the war? Whatever we answer, it will not satisfy all. But we can and should say something. For a start, that the war was not won by the foreign powers who intervened—Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin. Nor was it won by those who stood passively by—the Western democracies that abandoned the Spanish Republic to its fate, and in so doing precipitated the Second World War and their own losses and defeats. What of Franco, then, and his followers? Were they the victors? It is true that they prevailed on the battlefield, seized power, and ruled Spain for many years. But their victory has been transformed into a defeat. The Spain of today would not recognize itself in the Spain that Franco and his followers attempted to build; one could even say that it amounts to its negation. And the Popular Front, for its part, did not merely lose the war; today many of its ideas and plans have little historical relevance.

Then nobody won? The answer is a surprising one. The true victors were others. In 1937 two institutions seemed mortally wounded, annihilated first by ideological violence on both sides, and later by brute force. But the two revived, and today they are the basis of political and social life in Spain. I refer to democracy and constitutional monarchy.

Who among us, among the writers gathered in Valencia a half century ago, would have been able to predict the kind of constitutional regime Spain would have in 1987, much less the political complexion of its government? Such blindness should not surprise us; the future is impenetrable to men. But in every age there are farsighted people. I was privileged to know one such.

After World War II, I lived for some time in Paris. There, in 1946, I met the Spanish Socialist leader Indalecio Prieto. Though I had heard him speak many times in Spain, and also in Mexico, only then did I have the opportunity, on two occasions, to speak to him alone. Prieto was in Paris, as were many other exiled Spanish leaders, to seek a shift in their favor in the foreign policy of the democratic powers. I worked at the time at the Mexican Embassy. It occurred to me that the extraordinary concentration in Paris of so many figures of the Spanish opposition to Franco was an ideal opportunity to obtain a clearer idea of their plans and their programs, and also of the various elements battling for supremacy within the opposition. I spoke with various leaders, but in their words, passionate or prudent, to the point or beside the point, I found nothing new; their positions were all familiar.

Prieto was different. For two hours—he was rather long-winded and liked to spin out his ideas in detail—he explained to me that the only viable and civilized regime for Spain was a constitutional monarchy with a Socialist prime minister. The other solutions would issue either in civil chaos or in the prolongation of a reactionary dictatorship. His solution, on the other hand, would not merely assure a transition to a stable democracy, but would also open the doors to national reconciliation.

In those years, "formal democracy," as people used to say, seemed to me a trap. As for the monarchy, I always regarded it as a relic, or a British eccentricity. Prieto's words opened my eyes. I began to see things that ideology had blinded me to. I wrote up minutes of my conversation with the Socialist leader, adding

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Octavio Paz's *Collected Poems* will be published by New Directions next month. A version of this essay was given as the keynote address at the International Writers' Congress in Valencia in June, on the 50th anniversary of the Second International Congress of Antifascist Writers.

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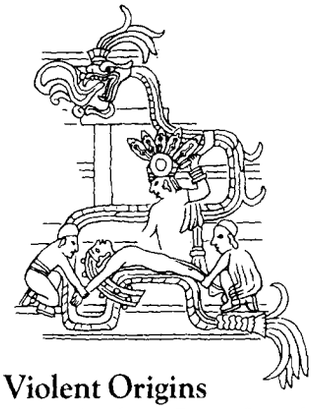
an imprudent personal suggestion that the government of Mexico might wish to orient its Spanish policies in the direction suggested by Prieto. I presented what I had written to my superiors at the embassy. One of them was an intelligent man, but too secure in his opinions. He read my pages with a combination of amazement and amusement. After a moment of silence, he returned them to me, mumbling: curious, but a useless literary exercise.

HISTORY IS a theater of the fantastic. Defeats become victories, victories defeats. Ghosts win battles. The decrees of crowned philosophers are more despotic and cruel than the caprices of dissolute princes. In the case of the Spanish Civil War, the victory of our enemies turned into ashes, but many of our own ideas and plans did too. Our vision of universal history, that is, our notion of a revolution of the oppressed destined to bring about a worldwide regime of universal harmony among peoples, and of liberty and equality among men, was shattered. The revolutionary idea has suffered mortal blows. The hardest and the most devastating blows have not come from its adversaries, however, but from the revolutionaries themselves: wherever they have won, peoples have been silenced. I need say no more about this; it has become the staple of preachers, ideologues, and necromancers. But I do wish to emphasize that the message of the Congress of 1937 was not essentially different at our reunion in 1987. I would dwell on this theme for a moment or two.

Today, as yesterday, circumstances are transient, ideas are relative, reality is unclear. Still, we cannot close our eyes to what is happening around us: the threat of atomic conflagration, the devastation of the environment, the suicidal gallop of demography, the convulsions of impoverished peoples who dwell at the periphery of the industrialized world, war wandering from one continent to another, the resurrection here and there of despotism, the proliferation of violence from above and below. To which we might also add the corruption of souls, a drying-up of the sources of human solidarity, the degradation of the erotic, the sterility of the imagination. Our consciences are also a theater of conflict, of disaster, as the century nears its end.

The reality that we see is not outside us, but within us. We are in it, and it is in us. We *are* it. We cannot ignore its



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summons; and for this reason history is not merely the realm of contingency and coincidence. It is a proving ground, a touchstone. History is nothing other than our daily living with, and among, others. To live is to live *with*. Despotic powers deform our being when they attempt to destroy our political dimension. For we do not exist fully, except with others, and in history.

But to live only in history, only for history, is not really to live. Apart from our private lives—which are unique and, I would even say, sacred—history must unfold in a domain beyond itself. History is a search for totality, a hunger for what lies beyond. Call that "beyond" what you will; history accepts all the names, but it does not retain any. This is history's greatest paradox: its eternities flicker, and its only absolute is change itself. No matter. Without that beyond, an instant is not an instant, and history is not history.

From the beginning, we live in two orders, parallel and separated by a precipice: the here and the there, contingency and necessity. Or as the scholastics used to say, accident and substance. In the past, the two orders were in constant communication. The decisions demanded by what we now call the "relative" were inspired by the principles and precepts of a beyond that was invulnerable to historical erosion. The river of time reflected heaven's writing. A script of eternal signs, legible for all, despite the turbulence of the current.

The modern age submitted the signs to radical surgery; they bled, and their meaning was dispersed. They ceased to be one, and became many. Ambiguity, ambivalence, a multiplicity of meanings—all valid and contradictory, all temporal. Man discovered that eternity was the mask of nothingness. But the discrediting of the beyond did not annul its necessity. The void was filled by other ideas, in succession; and each new system was transformed temporarily into a sufficient principle, into a foundation. The most disparate doctrines—even those that explicitly declared themselves to be not a "philosophy," but a "method"—inspired and justified every manner of temporal thought and action, as if they were eternal truths.

The two orders survive, although one of them—the governing principle—is periodically dethroned by a rival principle. The bridges between the two orders can barely be crossed anymore; not only are they too fragile, but all too often they collapse. In the face of this, we might exclaim, with Baudelaire, in "Rêve Parisien," "Terrible novelty!" The poet was confronted by a geometric landscape from which all living forms, all growing things, had disappeared. For us, the sight is terrible because the historical landscape, the theater of our thoughts and actions, is continually crumbling. It has no foundation, no basis. We are condemned to jump from one order of things to the other, and the jump is always mortal. We are condemned to err.

We wished to be brothers to the victims, and we found ourselves accomplices of their executioners. Our victories have become defeats, and our great defeat, perhaps, is the seed of a victory that we shall not live to see. Our sentence is the mark of modernity. And it is still more: it is the stigmata of the modern intellectual, stigmata in both senses of the term—sanctity and infamy.

WHILE I was reflecting upon this enigma (which would have fascinated Calderón and Tirso de Molina alike, since it is nothing other than the mystery of freedom), I recalled the indignant pages that Schopenhauer dedicated to Dante, specifically to Canto XXXIII of the *Inferno*. It is the canto in which the poet describes the ninth circle, to which traitors are consigned. It is, as you will recall, the deepest point in Hell, the region of ice. Traitors to the ideal of hospitality suffer an awful fate: the cold freezes their tears, and thus impedes them from giving free reign to their suffering. To weep is a form of relief; not to be able to weep is a double punishment.

One of the condemned begs Dante to wipe his eyes. The poet consents, in exchange for learning his name and his story. When the story is finished, the wretch says to him, "And now give me your hand, and open my eyes." Dante refuses. Morality—or, as he says, *cortesia*—demands that he play the villain to the sinner. And Schopenhauer explodes. "Dante fails to keep his promise," he writes, "because it seems inadmissible for him to relieve, even slightly, a punishment imposed by God. . . . I do not know if such actions are frequent in Heaven, and if there they are considered worthy of praise. Here on earth, anyone who conducted himself in such a fashion would be regarded as a scoundrel." And he adds, "This shows how difficult it is

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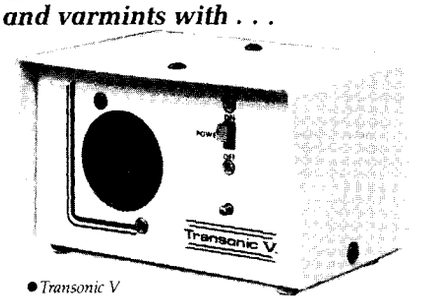

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to base an ethical system on God's will: good becomes evil, and evil good simply in the closing of eyes." Schopenhauer was not wrong. But an ethical system founded on other principles—say, Schopenhauer's—is subject to similar difficulties. This incongruence accompanies us always, as the worm accompanies the apple.

Again and again the philosophers have tried to discover some principle immune to change. None, I believe, has succeeded. Otherwise, we would know of it; it would be inconceivable for a discovery of such importance to remain secret for long. If the constructions of metaphysics have proven to be not more solid, but less solid, than religious revelation, what remains for us? Perhaps that principle with which the modern age began: doubt, criticism, inquiry.

I do not pretend to promote criticism into an immutable and self-sufficient principle. Quite the contrary, the first object of criticism must always be criticism itself. I add besides that the exercise of criticism includes ourselves. Criticism is not a self-sufficient principle, as the principles of traditional metaphysics pretended to be, but it has two advantages. First, it re-establishes the circulation between the two orders, since it examines each one of our acts and purges them of their fatal propensity to convert themselves into absolutes, or into deductions from some absolute principle. This is a propensity that almost always goes unnoticed by us, and it is the major source of evil.

Second, criticism creates a distance between us and our individual acts, which is to say, it compels us to see ourselves, and thus convert ourselves into others—into *the others*. And to insert the others into our own perspective is to alter radically the traditional relationship. What counts now is not God's will, just or unjust, but the pleading of the condemned who begs us to open his eyes. We cease to be servants of an absolute principle, without transforming ourselves into accomplices of a cynical relativism.

The Congress of 1937 was an act of solidarity with men locked in mortal struggle against an enemy better armed and sustained by unjust and evil forces. Men who were abandoned by the very people who should have been their allies and defenders, the Western democracies. The Congress was moved by an immense wave of generosity and authentic fraternity: among the participating writers, many were combatants, some had been wounded, some would die in the field of battle. All of these things—love, loyalty, courage, sacrifice—remain unforgettable. In them resides the moral grandeur of that meeting 50 years ago.

And its weakness? A perversion of the revolutionary spirit. We forgot that the revolution had been born in an act of critical thought. We did not see, or we did not wish to see, that that thought had been degraded into dogma, and that, in a moral and political transposition that was also a historic regression, in the name of revolutionary ideas opponents were silenced, revolutionaries and dissidents were murdered, the cult of doctrine was restored, and extravagant homage was made to an autocrat.

We forgot our teachers and ignored our predecessors. Other generations and other men had held that the right to criticism was the very foundation of the revolutionary spirit. In 1865, defending himself from attacks on his history of the French Revolution, Edgar Quinet wrote these words, which are equally applicable to our attitude in 1937:

> The criticism of reason has been made. Will you call those who made it enemies of reason? In the same way, if I criticize the Revolution, pointing out its errors and its limita-

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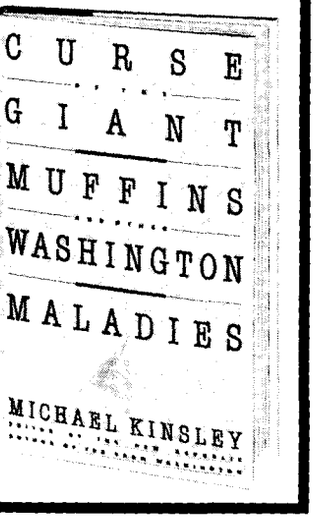

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tions, will you accuse me of being an enemy of the Revolution? If the critical spirit can fearlessly submit to examination the most sacred religious dogmas and even the Gospels, isn't it surprising that some would exempt revolutionary doctrine, and the great gospel of terror, from the same examination? In the name of the Revolution, some would extirpate the critical spirit. Take care: in the same way you will destroy the Revolution itself.

A few days before the opening of our Congress, a little book by André Gide appeared. It was a reiteration, and a justification, of a previous book in which he expressed his surprise at what he had seen and heard in Russia. Gide's criticisms of the Soviet Union were moderate, more like friendly chiding. Still, he was badly treated and vilified by the Congress; some even called him "an enemy of the Spanish people." Although many of us were convinced of the injustice of the attacks, although we admired Gide, we kept our silence. We justified our silence with the same specious arguments that Quinet denounced in 1865. In that way we contributed to the petrification of the revolution.

THE CASE OF Gide was not unique. There were other examples of moral independence. Everyone surely remembers George Orwell and Simone Weil, who dared to denounce the horrors and the crimes committed in the Republican zone without any disloyalty. On the other side there was also the admirable response of the Catholic writer Georges Bernanos, in his horrifying book, *Les grandes cimitères sous la lune*, and later, a similar account by Falangist poet Dionisio Ridruejo.

At Valencia, literary themes were hardly discussed at all. That was natural; the war was everywhere. But there were exceptions. Some of us believed in the freedom of art and the freedom of opinion, and confronted the partisans of "social realism." A few days ago, leafing through the issue of *Hora de España* dedicated to the Congress, I reread Arturo Serrano Plaja's contribution, which he made in the name of a group of young Spanish writers. For us, that text was the point of departure for a long campaign in defense of the free imagination. I recall it now, because freedom of expression is always in danger. It is threatened not merely by totalitarian regimes or military dictatorships, but also in capitalist democracies, by the impersonal forces of advertising and the marketplace. To submit art and literature to the same laws that govern the exchange of goods and services is a form of censorship no less pernicious, no less barbarous, than ideological censorship.

Since the 18th century, the tradition of Western literature has been a tradition of criticism, dissidence, rupture; I need not enumerate the successive artistic, philosophical, and moral rebellions of poets and writers, from Romanticism to the present day. The art that has suffered most at the hands of present-day mercantilism has been poetry, which has been driven to take refuge in the catacombs of consumer society. But other literary forms have been wounded as well, particularly the novel, which has become an object of debasing commercial speculation. In such a situation, it is useful to remember that our literature began with a nay to the powers that be. Negation and criticism founded the modern age.

But my most profound and lasting impressions of the summer of 1937 are not of meetings with writers, nor of arguments about politics and literature. I was moved, rather, by my first encounter with Spain and its people: to see with my eyes and to touch with my hands the landscapes, the monuments, the stones that I had known since childhood from my reading, and from the stories my grandparents told me. To strike up a friendship with Spanish poets, those who were close to the review *Hora de España* (a friendship that has endured, except when it has been broken, more than once, by death). To mix with soldiers, peasants, workers, schoolteachers, journalists, young and old, men and women. With them, through them, I learned that the word "fraternity" is no less precious than the word "liberty." It is the bread of men, the common bread.

That is no mere figure of speech. One night I was forced to take refuge with some friends in a village near Valencia while the enemy's air force, cornered by Republican air defenses, emptied its load of bombs on the highway. A peasant gave us shelter in his hut. When he discovered that I was from Mexico, one of the few countries that aided the Republic, he stole out to his orchard, braving the enemy bombs, and cut a melon. And there, with a heel of bread and a jar of wine, he shared it with us.

I could relate many other such episodes. But I prefer to end with an incident that affected me deeply. On one occasion I went with a small group—Stephen Spender will recall the event, he was with us—to visit the university in Madrid, which was on the front. Led by an officer, we toured the buildings and the rooms that had once been lecture halls and libraries. They were now transformed into trenches, into strongholds. We came to a huge hall full of sandbags. The official signaled us to keep silent. On the other side of the wall we could hear, clearly and distinctly, voices and laughter. Who are they? I asked in a whisper. They are *the others*, he replied. His words shocked me, and then left me with a great pain. I had discovered, suddenly and for always, that the enemy, too, has a human voice.

MARK STEVENS ON ART

The Unblinking Eye

In the theater, a mishap—such as a flubbed line or a falling prop—often has startling power. The damage done to artifice claps open our eyes. Glancing away with embarrassment, we look back with wonder: reality has become unexpectedly vivid, like a secret revealed. When the actors regain their composure, disappointment blunts the imagination. The make-believe, full of promise when the lights went down, now seems lifeless.

The English painter Lucian Freud has this startling power. The subject of a retrospective at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, Freud is typically called a realist. His realism is not a matter of the mirror, however, or a clinical examination of the less appealing facts of the flesh. It has a sharper point. Freud's realism has the intensity of sacrifice. Qualms, conventions, hopes—the charms of blindness—must suffer for the sake of truth. The theatrical is everywhere in Freud's art, but as something rejected instead of rendered. He is a master of the unaverted gaze, of the eye that will not blink. As a result, his painting, especially

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of the nude, is as disturbing as it is beautiful.

Freud, now 65, grew up in Berlin. (His father was an architect and the youngest son of Sigmund Freud.) The family immigrated to England in the 1930s to escape the Nazis. As a young artist, Freud seemed particularly interested in German painting—Dürer more than the modern expressionists. Instead of the painterly effects of his contemporaries, Freud sought a linear intensity that recalls the German master. "One senses rebellion in the mannered, spiky forms of Freud's drawing," writes Robert Hughes in his excellent catalog essay. "Everything is equally there, and must be equally described. This objectivity, this evenness of attention mingled with a barely veiled anxiety about the otherness of all objects—rooms, faces, plants, furniture—lies at the core of Freud's early work." To this day, Freud's portrayal of plants retains the spiky intensity of Dürer.

In the late 1940s and '50s, Freud achieved renown with some exceedingly stylish paintings. It makes sense that an artist so concerned with the delusions of artifice should himself know stylishness from the inside out. Despite their linearity, pictures like *Girl with roses* (1947/48) have a watery delicacy; the lines resemble the tracery on a slightly disturbed body of water or the high-strung veins on the flank of a thoroughbred horse. The eyes, almost transparent, glisten with reflections.

In such painting there is something pale and evanescent, like the melancholy of a dandy. Yet certain works also have a more robust power, above all Freud's great portrait of his friend Francis Bacon, painted in 1952. This picture is beautifully built. It depends not only on the strictness of the line, but on the punchy rhythms of the flesh. In the curvy play of the planes, in the way Bacon's face pockets light, we begin to feel flesh as a kind of malleable, thumb-poked clay.

In the late 1950s and early '60s, Freud roughed up his art. One might say he increased the proportion of the clay. His work turned physical, ham-handed, almost ugly. With a hog-hair brush he slathered on heavy paint (one thinks of Bacon and Soutine) in bold sweeping curves. The early pictures of this period are not entirely successful. They reveal too obviously the artist's need to recast his art. The crudity does not express enough. But what a wonderfully daring change for a stylish artist. The new work recalls earlier artists who also resisted the idealized: the elegant Degas, for instance, painting heavy women scrubbing themselves in washbasins. Or Courbet, whose brush managed to be both rough and right, like a callused hand that knows tenderness.

LARGE INTERIOR, PADDINGTON, 1968/69 (PRIVATE COLLECTION)

Freud's subsequent art has built, with increasing confidence, on this refusal to idealize. Much has been made of his realism; but this rarely explains enough, the critical question being "What reality?" Hughes quotes Freud saying, "I could never put anything into a picture that wasn't actually there in front of me. That would be a *pointless* lie, a mere bit of artfulness." But Freud also distinguishes between fact and truth, truth having about it the element of revelation, and says, "It is not necessarily immoral to leave out something that is there."

What is left out: that's the rub. Lovely silky skin and smiling flesh also exist—but you won't find them in Freud. Realism is always a seduction of reality, a disguise assumed by the imagination in order to convince. Hughes is not quite right to say that "the model is not an instrument of [Freud's] fantasies and he is not free to paint her or him any way but head-on." Freud may paint only what's there. Through the hole of what's left out, however, he lets himself in.

The nakedness is also Freud's, in other words. It resembles no other nakedness, though it may take the form of this or that unclothed friend. During the roughing-up period, a powerful new awkwardness, an immense discomfort with the body, enters his imagery. He brings to art a kind of English grittiness, a refusal to flinch before the human paste, that recalls Stanley Spencer. In the mid-1960s, Freud painted a great series of nudes that left many people very uneasy. In *Naked girl* (1966), the subject is a young blond woman. She lies on a sheet. Everything about Freud's presentation of her body stresses that she is a naked woman and not, to repeat the famous distinction, a nude. Her pose is ungainly,

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as if she has just finished writhing. Her skin is wonderfully alive and harshly lit. Her genitals yield to the painter's eye.

There is no hierarchy in the body. Freud reveals the pink secrets with the same passionate disinterest with which he renders the woman's head—or, for that matter, the sheet she lies on. (Freud's remark that he treats the head as "just another limb," in order to help the body itself become expressive, is as good a crack as Stravinsky's description of the piano as a "percussion instrument.") That evenness in Freud's eye, together with his refusal to allow the naked body to compose itself into a nude, appears cruel to some people. It is not Freud's detachment that is disturbing, however, but the vulnerability of his subjects. They appear used in two senses: as material for a work of art, and sexually. In the portrait just mentioned, the spent-looking woman lies on the bed like a beautiful dishrag. Because she is so vulnerable, we make her a victim.

As disturbing as these paintings might be, however, they are idylls when compared with two other Freuds, which display a sexual anxiety equal to anything in Bacon. In *Large interior, Paddington* (1968/69), we look down on a girl, still a child, lying on the floor beside a large plant whose tangle of leaves and branches twists upward toward the viewer. Hanging from one of the branches is a man's heavy coat. The plant and the girl lie before a large window, in a bright, unforgiving light. The girl wears only a T-shirt, her hair is mussed, and her naked legs are shut tight and bent away from the viewer, although the angle of the floor cants her forward.

One hand is between her legs, and she has an emptied, faraway expression. The little girl looks, in short, like a woman who has been raped—at once exposed and curled up in defense. The painting, while telling no such actual story, is steeped in guilt: one can hardly bear to see a child exposed to such sexual sadness. The painting is equally rich in terror. The twisting arms of the plant—a kind of grown-up mayhem above her—contrast with the child's stillness. A child is not supposed to be so still. Perhaps she is looking at the phallic form of a dead branch, which droops over the pot of the plant. The man's coat, hanging from the branch above her head, does not cover, protect, or comfort the naked child.

THE OTHER unforgettable picture is *Naked man with rat* (1977/78), in which a man with red hair reclines on a couch while holding a rat in one hand. To say that his legs are spread puts the matter too mildly. They yawn open: the presentation of the genitals is truly inescapable. This would seem trite—the old prick trick in which an artist proves his mettle—if the man did not have such a strange expression. He seems unaware of the viewer and stares upward into space: he is not showing off for our benefit. The pièce de résistance, of course, is the black rat held in the reddish hand. The man's flaccid penis points at the rat's glistening grey tail, which forms a gently curving arc on the man's thigh.

Is this clinical, perverse, horrible? Of course—but it's so many additional things (including beautiful) that no one adjective can bear the weight of description. The feeling in the painting is complex, for which Freud's way with the actual paint is largely responsible. The artist builds up the surface with a subtle interplay of line, tone, and flow of the brush. (The rat's tail, for example, makes many lovely rhymes with the folds in the couch and the body.) He generally avoids keyed-up colors, relying instead on siennas, grays, ochers, and umbers. The occasional brightness, such as the yellow of the egg yolks in *Naked girl with egg* (1980/81), gains revelatory force.

Yet the paintings radiate light, because each tone, each faceted plane, rubs its neighbor into a warm glowing. The Hirshhorn exhibit is not well lit, but the paintings remain luminous when seen across the room. (In reproduction the luminosity is lost, thereby destroying the exquisite balance in Freud's art between beauty and beast.) There is a chiseling of planes, a thickness in the surface, a granulation in the paint used for skin, which further suggest that flesh has here become a living clay. One must always refer to Freud's touch, meaning not just the painter's skill but the man's hand. The intimacy resides in the paint itself.

Handling the paint skillfully, with both honesty and passion, deepens the import of an image. It is not just Freud's skill with the brush, however, that makes these images powerful. Freud has little use for metaphor and symbol, but

INFERTILITY

We don't know how to name
the long string of zeros
stretching across winter,
the barren places,
the missing birthdates of the unborn.

We'd like to believe in their souls
drifting through space
between the Crab and the Northern Cross,
smoky and incandescent,
longing for incarnation.

We'd like to believe in their spirits descending,
but month after month, year after year,
we have laid ourselves down
and raised ourselves up
and not one has ever entered our bodies.

We'd like to believe that we have planted
and tended seeds
in their honor,
but the spirits never appear
in darkness or light.

We don't know whether to believe in their non-existence
or their secrecy and evasiveness,
their invisible spite.
Maybe it's past us, maybe it's the shape of nothing
being born,
the cold slopes of the absolute.

EDWARD HIRSCH

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his figures nonetheless have a provocative presence apart from the paint. The naked man with the rat, for example, is staring upward with his lips parted receptively. I doubt Freud intended to echo those paintings of saints in the throes of a vision, but this particular man, who resembles a cross between Joe D'Alessandro and a Christian martyr, has that otherworldly concentration. From God to gutter. Each can yield transcendence.

Freud's use of the studio inevitably gives his subjects an aura of remove, sadness, deracination. He does not make the studio a theater by providing distracting or alluring props. The studio enhances nakedness, for the model during the long hard hours of posing is stripped not only of clothes but of context. Like so many Englishmen in that class-obsessed society, Freud is very good at exposing facades and showing the dirt in the cracks. His recent painting *Large interior W.11 (after Watteau)* (1981/83) substitutes the shabby studio for Watteau's stylized rendering of nature. At the same time, Freud knows his sitters, which adds to the intensity. His strong portraits of his mother or *The big man* (1976/77) owe less to psychological insight, one feels, than to Freud's own involvement in the person before him.

I have been told the nudes include, among other people, a daughter of Freud's. It must be unsettling to paint one's daughter flagrantly naked. That Freud should do so is hardly surprising. Freud's realism lies in just such confrontations with taboo. They give his art its air of mastery. Something similar happened when Rembrandt and Soutine painted beef carcasses. The eye wanted to recoil. When it did not, however, its reward was power, beauty, and pathos. And one other thing—tenderness. Disgust mastered often leaves behind a feeling of tenderness toward the world.

Freud's art has a paradoxical moral character. At first, it seems altogether amoral in its aristocratic rejection of middle-class virtue and taste. (One eats in a great restaurant or a working man's pub.) The portrayal of the uncomfortable fact even flashes with a certain pride. At the same time, his art contains nothing morally cheap. Freud does not titillate the imagination: his eye is too serious. The paintings of women with animals, for example, lack the show-biz excitement of Eric Fischl's art. Nor does Freud simplify the flesh. The body does not become merely an excuse for formal exploration, as in Phillip Pearlstein's work. Most of all, Freud is honest. To face what most people don't, without swirling off into expressionist excess, has a surprising probity.

BRAIN DRAIN

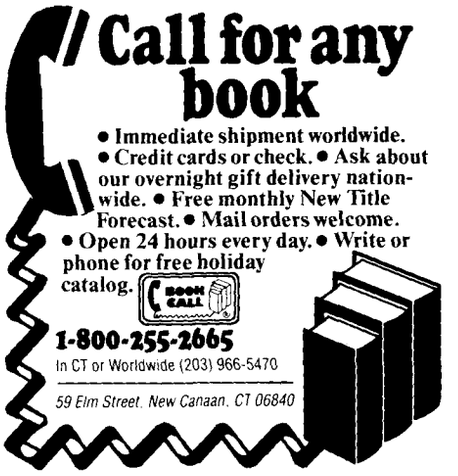
The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe by Russell Jacoby

(Basic Books, 290 pp., $18.95)

Russell Jacoby thinks that there is "a vacancy" in our culture. The postwar generation of intellectuals is missing. That generation "has not suddenly vanished," he says; "it simply never appeared. And it is already too late—the generation is too old—to show up."

If you are under 45, reading these assertions in the opening pages of *The Last Intellectuals* is likely to induce a mild out-of-body sensation. Having just started a book that nobody but an intellectual would be interested in reading, you suddenly learn that you do not exist. But if you can suspend disbelief in yourself for a few pages, you will discover that Jacoby's complaint is actually somewhat more specific.

By "intellectuals" Jacoby means "public intellectuals"—"writers and thinkers who address a general and educated audience." And the voices he misses among those who write for such an audience are, it turns out, the voices of "younger left intellectuals"—or (he tends to use the word interchangeably with "intellectuals") "radicals." Presented as a book about the decline of intellectual culture in America, *The Last Intellectuals* is in fact a book about the intellectual decline of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the American left. It is symptomatic of the book's confusion that its author apparently can see no difference between the two subjects.

Why has the true intellectual, in Jacoby's view, become an endangered species? Four answers are proposed. First, because of the disappearance of urban bohemias after the Second World War. "The demise of Greenwich Village," Jacoby argues, its transmogrification from an inexpensive enclave for artists and free thinkers into a neighborhood of high rents, weekend dropouts, and trendy merchandising,

> ensured the eclipse of the new generation of independent intellectuals. . . . New generations grow up in a world sharply subdivided into suburban malls, prosperous urban centers, and bleak ghettos for the poor. The geography—cultural and physical—offers few refuges for intellectuals seeking alternatives to city or suburban campuses.

Second, he credits McCarthyism with rooting out or intimidating radical thought in the academy, an assault that continues in the form of administrative hostility toward professors who take an activist interest in public issues. Left scholars, "when threatened, . . . have withdrawn, naturally, into their specialty." They now only theorize about the world, no longer wishing to be suspected of trying to change it. Third, Jacoby cites the co-optation of Jewish intellectuals, their transformation from radical critics outside the walls of the establishment to mainstream neoconservative apologists—trading, as he puts it, "their red pasts for blue-chip careers." ("Non-Jewish . . . intellectuals," he suggests, "seemed more willing or able to retain radicalism throughout their careers.")

And finally Jacoby blames the relentless absorption of intellectual life by the university, where everything is made to conform to the standards of a narrow and self-interested professionalism. The result is a general culture that can no longer produce or sustain independent men and women of letters, and an academic culture that holds no place for the engaged social critic. The younger generation has given us no Dwight Macdonald or Lewis Mumford or Edmund Wilson, no Daniel Bell or Alfred Kazin or Irving Howe, no Herbert Gutman or C. Wright Mills.

THERE IS no sense in responding to this argument by trying to name the baby boom Dwight Macdonald or Edmund Wilson. For one thing, it is pointless to measure promise against the achievement of a lifetime. Who was Edmund Wilson, what sort of cultural authority did he command, when he was 35? For another, why should intellectuals of this generation live the way intellectuals of the last lived? Of course the world of the intellectual has changed. So have the worlds of the butcher, the baker, and the munitions maker. If intellectuals no longer sip espresso in MacDougal Street cafés, but jet off to conferences in Frankfurt, that says nothing about the value of their thinking. No doubt a good deal of nonsense gets passed around at those conferences; but it seems safe to say that there was a proportionate amount of nonsense aired on MacDougal Street as well.

In any case, the contrast between prewar bohemians and post-war professionals is essentially factitious. The image of café society as the traditional setting for American intellectual life is incongruous; café society is one of the things American intellectuals used to go to Paris for. And the older-generation writers Jacoby names with reverence were scarcely "bohemians"; they worked for a living—as, usually, professional editors, journalists, teachers. The book's favorite examples of unreconstructed "radicals," Macdonald, Mumford, and Wilson, wrote for the *New Yorker*, a magazine that does not underpay its writers, and that cannot exactly be said to cater to radical or bohemian opinion.

THIS PREOCCUPATION with intellectual lifestyles is one instance of the book's most maddening feature: the insistent use of the term "intellectual" as an honorific, bestowed upon writers and thinkers whose view of public life conforms to the tradition Jacoby refers to as "radical." The intellectual is the marginal man; and since the marginal is the natural enemy of the mainstream, his politics must be left politics.

Thus Jacoby writes of neoconservatism as though it were simply an abandonment of intellect. "Conservatives' opposition to [academic] professionals founders on their suspicion of all intellectuals," he says. "They inch toward anti-intellectualism. . . . They do not allow that an independent intellectual can also be a critic of society." There are two errors in these sentences. The first is the obvious one of refusing to credit contemporary conservatism with having an intellectual position. It is hard to see how this refusal advances even a left critique of American culture. To complain that the dominant intellectual voice in public life today is neoconservative is to register a perfectly legitimate gripe; to say that because the dominant voice in public life is neoconservative there are no more intellectuals is simply incoherent.

The second error is more profound; it ratifies, in fact, the extraordinary success of the neoconservative movement. That error is the presumption that neoconservatives are not critics of American society. Nothing has been more disabling for liberalism than its willingness to accept—or its passiveness in the face of—the neoconservative's insinuation that his definition of America is true to the promise and true to the fact. It is not. The neoconservative tells us that our markets are, or ought to be, private and laissez-faire, when we have lived for 50 years, and can have every expectation of continuing to live, in a mixed economy. The neoconservative tells us that we have, or ought to have, a single cultural tradition, continuous with the culture the 18th-century Founders inherited from Western Europe, when our culture has always been polyethnic and pluralistic—a culture of cultures—and shows no sign of becoming less so. The neoconservative tells us that the American people would like to have their elected representatives legislate in matters of private morality, if only liberal courts would let

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them; but when Robert Bork was stopped at the very doorstep of the Supreme Court, it was because senator after senator could not accept his contention that the Constitution implied no right to privacy. Isn't Robert Bork a radical, and a critic of American society, and an intellectual? Isn't Allan Bloom?

To say that Jacoby's analysis is hobbled by this inability to see that social criticism is not the exclusive purview of the left—an inability reflected in a callow refusal to grant contemporary conservatism intellectual cogency—is an understatement. *The Last Intellectuals* is a small monument to that infirmity. Thus, to take a single example, when Jacoby discusses the career of Herbert Gutman, he cites Gutman's *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, his reply to Daniel Patrick Moynihan's report on the black family and the culture of poverty, as an instance of the kind of intellectual heroism younger academics no longer attain to. But surely Moynihan's report—whether one regards its conclusions as accurate or distorted, progressive or reactionary—was in its context the radical statement, the affront to conventional wisdom. Yet Moynihan is not mentioned as a "public intellectual."

THE REALLY interesting question about post-war intellectual life, the question Jacoby's book struggles to confront, is the question of what happened to the New Left as a source of political opinion. "By the 1980s," wrote Jack Newfield in 1966, "Tom Hayden, Norman Fruchter, Robb Burlage, Mario Savio, Dick Flacks, Bob Parris, and Carl Oglesby will be major social critics." Jacoby cites the prediction and notes the irony; and he devotes two chapters of his book to explaining what happened. Here was a movement that was not bereft of ideas, that had demographics on its side, that crossed swords often with leftists of the older generation and won many of the battles; and today, 20 years later, the Old Left (some of them now the new conservatives) still rules the turf of public political discourse, and the New Left, in anything like its original inspiration, has sunk from view. Where did it go?

Jacoby's answer is that it went into the academy, where it lost its voice in the Babel of scholarship. "The New Left that stayed on the campus," he says,

> proved industrious and well behaved. Often without missing a beat, they moved from being undergraduates and graduate students to junior faculty positions and tenured appointments. . . . In the end it was not the New Left intellectuals who invaded the universities but the reverse: the academic idiom, concepts, and concerns occupied, and finally preoccupied, young left intellectuals.

Politics became university politics, department politics, career politics. "American Marxists today," Jacoby notes with scorn, "have campus offices and assigned parking spaces." They paved paradise, put up a faculty lounge.

THE ANALYSIS is not new, but it is sound; and to his credit Jacoby pursues it with pretty much the same asperity as he does his attack on liberal converts to neoconservatism. (Despite everything else about it, this book is not without bravery; it spares almost no one.) But because he is so chary of giving credit even to his own side, Jacoby underestimates the extent to which, for better or worse, younger academics have succeeded in the last ten years in moving political concerns to the foreground in some disciplines (the politics of interpretation in the humanities, the politics of law in legal education), and the extent to which this new emphasis has affected the way those subjects are taught.

But Jacoby is right to understand the struggle as primarily a professional one, conducted on professional terms for professional prestige. His complaint is that in the process the connection with the greater world outside the disciplines has been lost:

> Professionalization leads to privatization or depoliticization, a withdrawal of intellectual energy from a larger domain to a narrower discipline. Leftists who entered the university hardly invented this process, but they accepted, even accelerated it. Marxism itself has not been immune.

One need not share the surprise at the academicization of contemporary American Marxism—with no constituency in the real world, where else was it to go but to the land of theory?—to feel the general justice of the point. The American university has been in one of its contractive phases since the '60s, and when enrollments sag and the job market tightens, professional standards tend to narrow as well. And when standards narrow, esotericism, accompanied by a certain hysterical careerism, creeps into the discourse. Phases like this one have recurred cyclically throughout the history of the academy, and the current contraction may be approaching its term; but it has, in the meantime, done its damage to intellectual life—and not only to intellectual life on the left.

BUT SUPPOSE that history in its cunning reversed the processes by which, as Jacoby describes it, younger intellectuals on the left have been silenced, or entangled by the academic octopus. What would those intellectuals contribute to the public debate? Jacoby does not consider the question one would have thought came before all other questions: whether the ideas of the left have faded from the intellectual scene not because of some failure in the environment, but because of some failure in the ideas. Jacoby therefore does not speculate about what a left critique of American life would look like if it recovered its public voice.

His assumption appears to be that it would sound pretty much the way it sounded 40 years ago. The hero of *The Last Intellectuals*, the writer put forward most enthusiastically as the model of critical thinking and forceful expression, is C. Wright Mills. Much in Jacoby's attack on the contemporary intellectual for abandoning his independence is in fact a conscious echo of Mills's analysis in *White Collar* (1951). This is the way Mills put it:

> When irresponsible decisions prevail and values are not proportionately distributed, universal deception must be practiced by and for those who make the decisions and who have the most of what values there are to have. An increasing number of intellectual men and women work within powerful bureaucracies and for the relatively few who do the deciding. . . . If, as never before, intellectuals find it difficult to locate their masters in the impersonal machineries of authority in which they work, this, despite the anxieties it may at times cause them, makes more possible the postures of objectivity and integrity they continue to fancy.

It is indeed a style of expression one encounters less frequently these days. The mind-numbing level of abstraction (what does it actually mean to say that "values are not proportionately distributed"?), the demagogic language ("universal deception," "their masters in the impersonal machineries of authority"), and above all the complete contempt for the motives and the claims to "objectivity" and "integrity" of all but the like-minded—if this is indeed what Jacoby means by public left discourse, it doesn't seem such a misfortune that we should have to wait for it to discover new minds and new voices.

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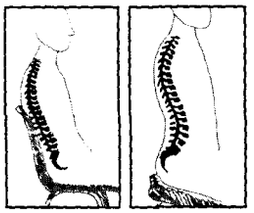

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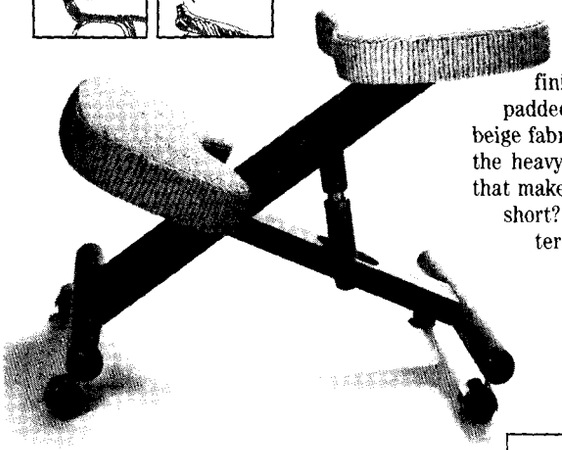

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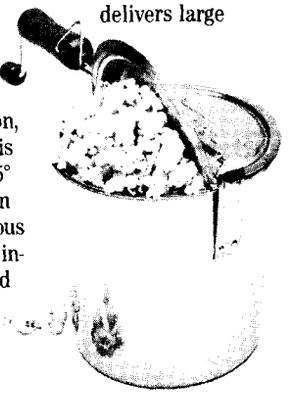

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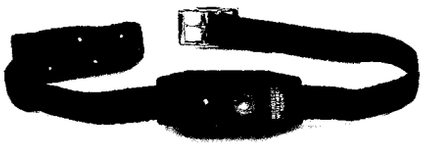

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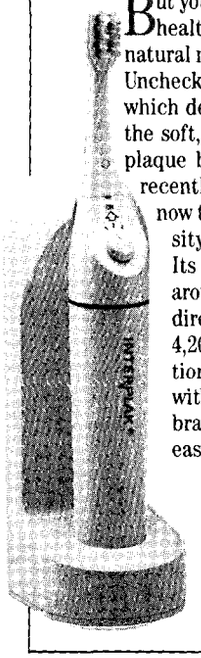

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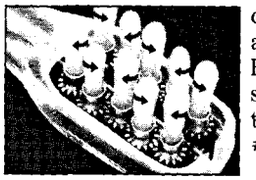

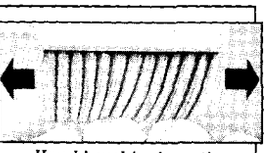

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THE STORYTELLER AS HERO

Tevye the Dairyman and the Railroad Stories by Sholem Aleichem translated with an introduction by Hillel Halkin

(Schocken: Library of Yiddish Classics, 309 pp., $19.95)

In an industrial age, when writers are moved to resurrect and preserve the past before it is polluted forever, one of the ways they do so is by telling stories. It happened in Germany, when the Brothers Grimm reinvented the *märchen* and inspired the Romantic school of literary fairy tales. It happened in czarist Russia at the end of the 19th century, with the Tolstoyan return to the land and to stylized folk narratives. It is happening now, in postindustrial America, with the rise of professional storytellers who hone their craft at regional workshops and national conferences.

It happened, perhaps most dramatically, at the very eclipse of Western civilization, in 1936, when one of our century's most outstanding literary critics, Walter Benjamin, produced a minor classic on the subject of storytelling. His essay "The Storyteller," written as an appreciation of Nikolai Leskov, distinguished between the teller of local tales and traditions who was rooted in the soil, and the teller of exotic places who returned from his travels with knowledge of the outside world. Benjamin praised the storyteller above the novelist for inhabiting a moral world of "experience" rather than an alienated world of "facts." The pauper was suddenly turned into the prince of fiction.

Leskov died in 1895, just when a younger compatriot of his, Sholem Aleichem, was beginning to people his fiction with surrogate storytellers who fit Benjamin's typology exactly. Among the most outstanding were Tevye the patriarchal dairyman, who remained firmly rooted in the past, and the anonymous traveling salesman who collected the unusual tales told to him over the years in the third-class compartment of the train. These tellers opened up the other side of Leskov's Russia: a world of Jewish religious passions and of crazy Jewish schemes, a closed and self-destructing world that could best be captured in a medium at once both fluid and conventional, popular and predetermined—the live narrated story.

One might have thought that Jewish writers from Eastern Europe, born into a traditional society and not yet plagued with industrial angst, would have no trouble harnessing the story as a modern literary vehicle. But insofar as storytelling conjured up a communal world of folklore, fantasy, and superstition, it could not be reconciled with the new, secular culture that the Young Turks were trying to create in Hebrew and in Yiddish. The young Sholem Aleichem was no exception, despite the folksiness of his adopted pen name (which means "How Do You Do"). Storytelling was anathema to Sholem Rabinovitsh, raised as a good merchant's son on Orthodox Judaism, on the Hebrew Enlightenment, and on Russian secular culture.

In 1873, a year after his bar mitzvah, Sholem was enrolled in the Russian school of his native city, Pereyaslev, in the Ukraine. Supporting himself as a private Russian tutor, he later met and eloped with one of his students, the daughter of a rich Jewish landowner, whose estate Sholem would inherit. Turgenev could not have written it better. Meanwhile Sholem's father encouraged his son's fledgling efforts in Hebrew, which was the proper vehicle for an enlightened young man. An early work was his story of the "Sights and Dark Sides" of small-town Jewish life; it exposed a fanatic resistance to change, caustic humor, exaggerated fears. Still, there was nothing in it to suggest a reappropriation of Jewish folk life.

But things *were* changing in czarist Russia. People were moving from the villages and towns to the cities, or away from Russia altogether, to the Golden Land. There was mob violence, political reaction, universal unrest. Gone was the Jewish enlighteners' hope for gradual, liberal reform, within Jewish life and without. The revolutionary alternative that captured the minds of these despairing intellectuals was "autoemancipation," first proclaimed by Leo Pinsker in 1882. It was a call for national self-determination on one's own land.

Against this backdrop, Sholem Aleichem embraced the cause of Yiddish literature. At night he busied himself writing Yiddish novels. (During the day he played the Kiev stock market with the money left to him by his father-in-law.) The choice of the novel was predictable. If the end was Jewish national renewal, then emulating the pride of modern Russia—its great novelists—would earn one's own people a place among the nations. At 29, Sholem Aleichem produced his first "authentic" Jewish novel, *Stempenyu*.

Perhaps even more impressive than the novel itself, a tragicomic love story about a Jewish musician named Stempenyu, was the place in which it appeared: a large and handsomely produced Yiddish literary almanac, modeled on the great Russian miscellanies of the 19th century. The publisher-editor was none other than Sholem Aleichem himself, who paid his authors the unheard-of sum of 20 kopeks a word. Among the most prominent contributors were I. L. Peretz, making his first appearance in Yiddish, and the veteran prose writer Mendele Moykher-Sforim (or Mendele the Bookseller). Sholem Aleichem dedicated his novel to Mendele, whom he addressed as his *zeyde*, or grandfather, thereby inventing a literary tradition with himself as its rightful heir. Alongside this ambitious publishing venture Sholem Aleichem launched a vigorous campaign against the sensational potboilers then flooding the Yiddish market; responsible "folk writers," he argued, needed social realism, stylistic discipline, high moral purpose.

While Sholem Aleichem looked to Russian and European models to legitimate the new secular forms and forums he sought to introduce, he also believed that the content of this new, national culture had to be drawn from Jewish life. That is why Stempenyu, the passionate folk fiddler, was the ideal protagonist. Here was a Romantic hero who spoke his own musician's argot (faithfully transcribed and annotated throughout the novel), who was also free to pursue the passions of his heart. After all, where else but on the fringes of respectable society would one find a Jewish lover? According to the dictates of social realism and high moral purpose, however, the selfsame hero would have to be eclipsed by the married heroine, the very model of bourgeois respectability, who successfully thwarted his advances. Anna Karenina would not have made it in the shtetl.

Six years later, in 1894, Sholem Alei-

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chem discovered a different kind of folk hero. At first he described him as a kind of noble savage: "a healthy, broadly built Jew, dark and hairy, hard to tell his age, wearing large boots and a grimy cloak over a warm undershirt, even in the greatest heat." Tevye too had his own special language, a densely idiomatic style replete with quotations and pseudo-quotations from Scripture and the liturgy, from Ukrainian proverbs, and imitations of other people's speech. "Tevye is always eager to talk, loves a folk saying, a proverb, a snippet of Scripture; he's no scholar, but he's no ignoramus either when it comes to Hebrew print."

In the first of the Tevye monologues, there was a note of condescension in the narrator's voice, and a touch of the grotesque in Tevye's self-involvement. Sholem Aleichem did not yet appreciate what he had discovered; he was not yet comfortable allowing the folk to speak its mind freely. Later he removed the professional narrator completely, retaining him only as an implied listener, and enlarged Tevye's emotional repertoire so that his voice might speak for all traditional fathers trying to make sense of a changing world.

WHY, THOUGH, after working so hard to modernize Jewish culture by means of the novel and highbrow literary periodicals, did Sholem Aleichem suddenly revert to the outmoded form of the monologue? More important, what prompted him to move from condescension to creative identification with the folk? Here we come to the delicious paradox of modern Jewish culture: just as the impetus to modernize came from the outside, so too did the model of reclaiming one's lost resources. Though Leskov might have served him just as well, Sholem Aleichem's direct influence was Gogol. His portrait, along with Mendele's, graced Sholem Aleichem's study. During the 1890s, Gogol was a ubiquitous presence in Sholem Aleichem's life. He kept a box marked "Gogol" on his desk for work in progress; he wore his hair à la Gogol, could quote him, even imitate his manner. What is most prized today in Sholem Aleichem's work owed its inspiration to Gogol. The laughter-through-tears formula, which is supposed to capture the essence of Sholem Aleichem's humor, came from the famous seventh chapter of *Dead Souls*.

Thus, when Sholem Aleichem paid his first visit to Berdichev in 1897, he began madly to record all its sights and sounds, exclaiming to his brother: "If Gogol could make a hamlet famous, why shouldn't I be able to immortalize Berdichev!" From that visit the fictional town of Kasrilevke was later born. As Gogol had badgered his friends for anecdotal material that he might fashion into stories, so too did Sholem Aleichem, especially after leaving Russia. And as spoken language became the center of Gogol's reality—the source of the comic, the grotesque, the fantastical—so Sholem Aleichem reinvented spoken Yiddish through a fusion of myth and the mundane.

Like Gogol, in his *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* (the "hamlet" mentioned above), Sholem Aleichem created a character so real, a folk milieu so rich, that the audience mistook it for ethnography. Tevye's speech was so thoroughly absorbed into modern Yiddish that linguists can no longer determine where folklore ends and Sholem Aleichem begins. Of Gogol's four fictive narrators in *Evenings*, however, none was as memorable as Tevye, who alone spoke all the lines, played all the roles, and kept appearing for 20 years. Tevye's ability to deflect the shock waves of history while remaining absolutely fixed in one tiny place accorded him legendary status. (Even a trip to the nearest shtetl was a rare treat for Tevye, not to speak of a visit to the city of Yehupetz-Kiev. Tevye's place was in the forest, and his sole means of conveyance was his wagon drawn by his long-suffering horse.) It was Tevye's ability to reshape personal griefs and collective tragedies into perfectly wrought tales that made him the greatest storyteller in Jewish fiction.

What a difference between Tevye and Stempenyu! The young Sholem Aleichem had discovered Stempenyu the folk fiddler as a naive vehicle of romantic rehabilitation. The mature artist found in Tevye, in the natural, Bible-quoting dairyman, a meaning and a method to explore life's contradictions. And the main contradiction was this: within a closed and crumbling world that had scant intellectual resources, that offered the most paltry economic and social rewards, a spiritual giant could exist, and persist. What's more, this hero, who would never be comfortable appearing in someone else's idea of a modern European novel, was allowed to

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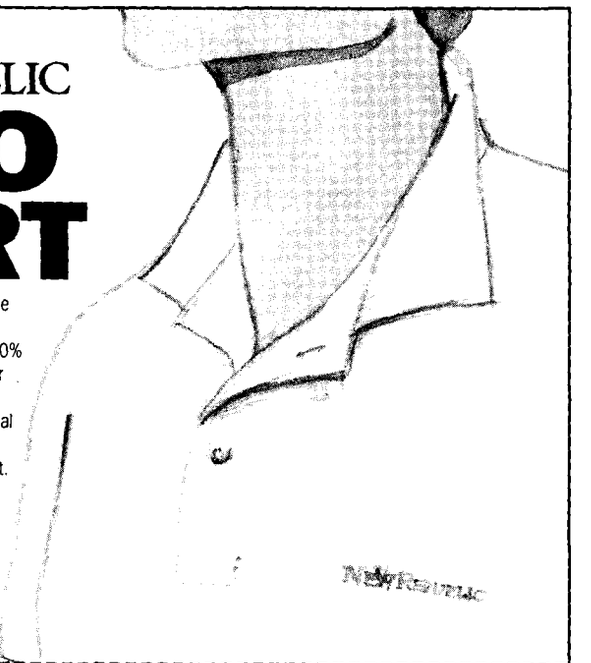

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weave his own spiritual tapestry out of the most conventional cloth: a story whose "moral" was already spelled out from the start, whose plot was utterly predictable.

"If you're meant to strike it rich, Pani Sholem Aleichem, you may as well stay home with your slippers on, because good luck will find you there too." On that note of upbeat fatalism Tevye began his first story, narrated "live" to the celebrated writer Sholem Aleichem in 1894. In life there were but two possible plots: a miraculous stroke of good luck, or an undeserved catastrophe. Tevye experienced the first only once. He was fated to experience the second again and again.

WHAT SUSTAINED HIM through this fatal predictability were his own storytelling talents; or, to be more precise, his ability to change the nature of experience by narrating it. He did it by stringing dialogues together into a story. The use of dialogue had several advantages. Since nobody could play with language nearly as well as he did, this already gave him an edge over all the others who caused him grief: his daughters, their suitors, the Jewish gentry, the local gentiles. Second, the dialogues, many of them internal, recorded the full range of Tevye's responses, which were always more important than the events themselves. Finally, the dialogues not only demonrated Tevye's skills, they were themselves a commentary on the saving power of language in a world bent on self-destruction.

What also sustained him was having somebody who would listen. Besides Sholem Aleichem, who was available only now and again, Tevye could always rely on God to lend a sympathetic ear. God's presence was palpable, especially in the forest, where Tevye was most eloquent. But Tevye was no pantheist, or mystic; he was an ironist. Drawing on the limited repertoire of sacred texts known to a man of simple learning, he "misquoted" them, or otherwise undercut them with his own ironic commentary (superbly captured, for the first time, by Hillel Halkin's new translation). Through 20 years of incremental sorrows, Tevye continued to challenge God with God's own words, which in turn produced, as Halkin puts it, "one of the most extraordinary Jewish religious texts of our own, and perhaps of any, time."

Tevye's growing awareness of himself as a Jobian figure made his complaint against God, and his utter dependence on him, more poignant. At the low point of his paternal career, after fleeing the home of the rich uncle who disavowed his nephew's betrothal to (the pregnant) Shprintze, Tevye burst into tears:

> I went over to my wagon, laid my head on it, and—but promise not to laugh at me!—I cried and cried until I had no tears left. Then I climbed aboard, whipped my poor devil of a horse to within an inch of his life, and asked God an old question about an old, old story: What did poor Job ever do to You, dear Lord, to make You hound him day and night? Couldn't you find any other Jews to pick on?

To be sure, there was something ennobling in being chosen by God, in being paired with the biblical Job. It was also revealing of Sholem Aleichem's own humanistic outlook that the man chosen as Job's pair was not a rabbi, a *tzaddik*, or a young revolutionary, but a simple backwoodsman. For Tevye-Job was a new kind of archetypal figure who stood for the Jewish people as a whole. He embodied the "folk" who had no access to power, to politics, to the press, but who never lost the ability to protest its innocence and to demand redress.

Thus Tevye's fortitude inverted the old spiritual hierarchy. He was a true democratic hero. On the other hand, his very traditionalism defied at least two secular pieties. In the battle of "Fathers and Sons," as it was waged in 19th-century Russian, Hebrew, and Yiddish novels, the author's sympathies were always on the side of the young. But Sholem Aleichem, by allowing Tevye to upstage everyone else, made the young progressives into foils to the tragicomic patriarch. Moreover, Tevye's sense of déjà vu, of being an actor in an ancient drama, belied all the political ideologies designed to harness the forces of history. Tevye's combination of faith and fatalism was perhaps the only balancing act that could bridge the abyss of time.

BUT COULD the act be accomplished outside of the mythic forest, where even the horses understood Yiddish and every tree sang praises to God? How about on board the very symbol of modern technology, the train? Here the nervous pace of travel allowed for no long-term relationships. Here people were immediately segregated by class and had to act accordingly. Still, by virtue of the bleak economic conditions prevailing in Russia, a place of refuge did exist, an almost homogeneous environment where a whole class of Jewish travelers—middlemen and merchants—could meet and swap stories: the third-class compartments. As one would expect, their stories were adapted to fit the setting; memory was strictly personal, plots were secular, and very few actually ended.

Trains had benefitted the Russian Jews little, for there was still no place to go to make a living within the so-called Pale of Jewish Settlement. In the eight-year span covered by the *Railroad Stories* (1902-1910), the political situation dramatically worsened; the constitutional reforms announced in October 1905 were followed by counterrevolutionary violence. One of the victims of this upheaval was Sholem Aleichem himself. He left Russia in the aftermath of the Kiev pogrom in 1905. He returned triumphally in 1908, only to collapse with a near-fatal attack of tuberculosis. This was followed by years of convalescence in this spa and in that. Thus Sholem Aleichem's own state of exile was perfectly matched by the crowded third-class compartments rumbling across the Ukraine, where the only reprieve from the rain always falling outside was playing another game of cards and listening to a half-crazed fellow passenger narrate another tale of woe.

GESHIKHTE, the Yiddish word for story, also means history. What began in Sholem Aleichem's mind as a series of *peklekh*, or personal sob stories, became, after his own self-imposed exile and subsequent run-in with death, a vast panorama of dissolution. Blackmail, suicide, bankruptcy, police raids, draft exemptions and draft quotas were a staple of these travelers' tales. As Halkin reminds us in his admirable introduction, even the most ludicrous plots had their basis in historical fact. Indeed, English readers will discover from this first complete translation of the *Railroad Stories* that Sholem Aleichem's confrontation with modernity has few equals in Yiddish literature: not in the writing of Sholem Asch, who, despite the historical sweep of his novels, fell back on a soppy ecumenism just when one of the ecumenical partners—the Jews—was being wiped off the face of the earth; and not in the writing of Issac Bashevis Singer, who tends to remove his heroes from society when the going gets rough. That Sholem Aleichem could wrest some ironic consolation even from this bleak historical landscape is the real measure of his greatness.

The third-class compartment was a

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refuge of sanity because it was the only place in a technological world where the act of storytelling could still flourish; where, in the words of the anonymous traveling salesman, "suddenly everyone is telling everybody everything, and everything is being told to everyone. The whole car is talking together at once in a splendid show of Jewish solidarity." Though encounters en route were notoriously fickle and fake, Jews were more likely to let down their guard among their own. And once the barriers were down, they could share a "world of experience," to reinvoke Benjamin's telling phrase. For these uprooted men (it was still an all-male subculture), storytelling was never an escape from reality, a return to some preindustrial paradise. It was a communal act of purgation, a modern rite of passage, a temporary means of turning chaos into comedy.

DAVID G. ROSKIES

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

tory and human nature. Mr. Simon also appears to believe that Soviet-American enmities are based on mutual misunderstandings that can be swept away by grass-roots contacts between ordinary people, because they would invariably lead to greater warmth and mutual appreciation. Unhappily, such views barely differentiate Mr. Simon from the other Democratic contenders for the nomination—except Al Gore, whom the rest, Mr. Simon in particular, abjure precisely for his views on foreign policy. It is distressing to observe, besides the tight grip of isolationism, how much influence sheer ignorance has come to exert over Democratic leaders' views of the world and international relations.

PAUL HOLLANDER
Amherst, Massachusetts

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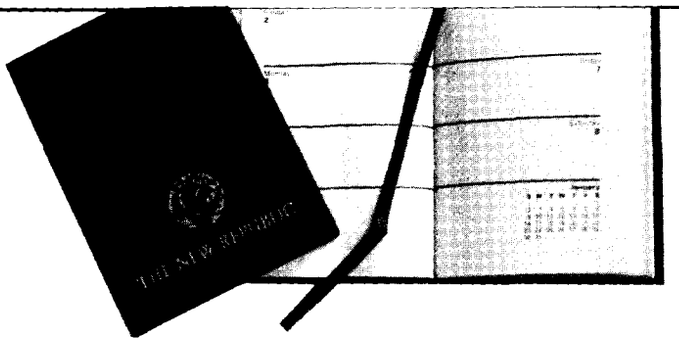

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Second Thoughts

THE AD IN a recent issue of TNR announcing a "Second Thoughts Conference" at which former New Leftists and other radicals would discuss among themselves the political journeys they had taken since the 1960s was a bit overwrought. Most of us had never really "condemned America's democracy as a sham." I know I hadn't, even if the organizers of the conference had. Nevertheless, I was willing to be listed as a participant and, despite the mail I received from alert and alarmed readers, I went. There actually were some people with second thoughts in attendance. But there were at least as many who'd never had a second thought in their lives. These mostly young men and women of the old right were there to hear and judge our second thoughts, looking without success for recruits to the conservative cause. Still, they were, on balance, a tolerant bunch. Their disappointment that apostasy did not necessarily mean conversion never turned churlish. I cannot report that this same forbearance also characterized the attitude of those second thoughters whose pilgrimages did not stop until they had gone clear across the spectrum. But, then, they now hold even Ronald Reagan suspect.

I ADMIT STILL to being provoked by the intellectual and political positions carved out by Norman Podhoretz, editor of *Commentary*—provoked in the good sense, even though Podhoretz increasingly seems to think of himself as the last guard at Thermopylae, certifiably a lonely post. And I certainly find much that's challenging in the work of Hilton Kramer, the editor of *New Criterion*. But their mode of discourse is more sectarian than civil, sectarian in the way the old left used to be. They don't merely refuse to suffer fools. They refuse to suffer differences, which is a curious disposition for defenders of democracy. Four younger veterans of the 1960s and 1970s had recounted—reflectively, self-critically, and eloquently—the tales of their political education, examining where and why they had been wrong on Vietnam and Cambodia, on Cuba, most importantly on America itself. This focus on the political, however, did not satisfy Podhoretz and Kramer, who complained that this confessional had omitted the counterculture. They don't see that sober and serious second thoughts do not always require renunciation or repudiation. These, like denunciations of old friends, are usually ugly gestures. For Podhoretz and Company, nothing less than comprehensive confessions will do: personal, cultural, moral, stylistic. They want to make sure about men's souls. Positive avowals of faith in the unfettered free market are required too. And, oh yes, support for Star Wars and probably the elimination of taxes on capital gains. Salvation is clearly a package deal.

IF SOME OF the panelists were overly doctrinaire, David Horowitz and Peter Collier, the former self-styled Berkeley revolutionaries who put the conference together (with the support of several right-wing foundations), were much more open-spirited and easy, a happy residue from the 1960s. They did not stack the panels. Even among the senior neocons there was remarkable diversity. Irving Kristol remembered his years as a Communist and Trotskyite ... well, lightly. Nathan Glazer, always the odd man out in the cohort of which he is thought to be an intellectual father, made some rather dovish remarks on foreign policy. One woman in the audience thought he sounded "dangerously soft on the Soviets." Then there was Bruce Cameron, a former staffer at Americans for Democratic Action who had been converted in the past couple of years to the cause of the *contras*. Cameron stunned the crowd by explaining, not altogether coherently, why he could no longer support aid to the Nicaraguan rebels. There were some scattered hisses but otherwise he was treated courteously. By contrast, even today on American campuses left-wing students won't permit pro-*contra* speakers the opportunity to express their views. Cameron also announced that he is now employed as a Washington lobbyist for the People's Republic of Mozambique. Once this seasoned Washington operative had come out against the Sandinistas, no one in respectable liberal circles would give him a job. How's that for tolerance?

FOR MOST OF the second thoughters the painful epiphany came after the Communist victory in Indochina. The boat people, the Vietnamese "re-education" camps, the Cambodian genocide should have taught us all quickly enough how tragically stupid was our expectation, summed up in Frances Fitzgerald's tragically stupid book, that "the Vietnamese way is ... that of accommodation leading to unanimity," that with American withdrawal and the withdrawal also of our aid to the South Vietnamese army "the narrow [!] flame of revolution [would] cleanse the lake of Vietnamese society." What a cleansing. I agree with the slogan "No More Vietnams," our national mantra of recent years, but I interpret it differently from its usual bumper-sticker meaning. This is why, like others, I have been stirred by all of those former anti-Somoza revolutionaries who now make up so much of the Nicaraguan resistance. Five of them brought their second thoughts to the conference. One, weighing the ravages of war against the ravages of tyranny, hesitates to ask for American aid. (Another of them had trouble getting an entry visa to the United States because the State Department thought him a Communist.) If you, dear reader, would actually meet these gentle democrats, I cannot believe you would think of them other than as comrades. There was, of course, something very poignant about their appearance in Washington. After years of struggling against the CIA's alliance with the worst and "most reliable" of the *contras*, they had substantially reformed and liberalized the *contra* leadership. And their now rather more disciplined peasant army was winning battles in the field. They had also actually won over Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, though possibly just for his own tactical reasons, to their view of what the opposition to the Sandinistas must stand for. But they couldn't win over Senator Dodd or Speaker Wright, an inability that may prove decisive. And if the entrenchment of the Ortega regime means what I think—the kind of thoroughgoing revolutionary transformation that has brought suffering and sadness to many countries—will Dodd and Wright admit, at some second thoughts conference of the future, that they had been wrong and that their errors helped doom yet another people to the nightmare of liberation?

M. P.

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